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SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

PREACHED AT

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,

BLACKBURN.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL DEAN, 12

MINISTER OF THE SAID CHURCH,

AND LATE HEAD-MASTER OF THE FREE GRAMMAR-SCHOOL.

*"The Law of the Lord is an undefiled Law, converting the Soul:
The Testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth Wisdom unto
the Simple." Psalm xix. ver. 7.*

VOLUME I.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

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PREACHED AT

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH



TO
THE PROPRIETORS OF
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,
BLACKBURN,
THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSES,
FROM A SENSE OF GRATITUDE,
AND SINCERE AFFECTION,
ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY THEIR MUCH OBLIGED,
AND HUMBLE SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

May 1, 1795.

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BY THEIR MUCH OBLIGED,

AND HUMBLE SERVANTS,

THE WITNESSES

P R E F A C E.

IN the following pages the reader, it is hoped, will not expect any display of genius, or erudition. These Discourses were written, and preached, for the use and benefit of the author's own Congregation, without any wish, or design, of making them public. His Friends, to whom his services are due, and to whom they ought ever to be devoted, had indeed requested the publication of some of them; but even their wishes would not have induced him to deviate from his resolution, if an unchristian spirit of *persecution*, from *interested motives*, and a *wilful* misrepresentation of the *sentiments*, and *doctrine*, therein contained, had not rendered it indispensably necessary.

Variety, or difference, of *Opinion*, is no solid ground for Dispute.—The Gospel teacheth us, that we shall be judged hereafter, not from *written Creeds*, not from *Opinions* of the head, but from our Love to, or Neglect of, the blessed Truths of the holy Word, and in proportion as we have evidenced such love, or such neglect thereof, by a corresponding *life*, and *practice*.

Much, it is to be lamented, hath at all times, been *said* about Religion, its Nature, its Operations, and the like; whilst the *practical* observance, and fulfilment thereof, hath been little attended to, or observed. Men, unhappily, too often call *opinion* *Truth*, *outward devotion* *Religion*, and substitute the *knowledge* of the *head*, for the *experience* of the *heart*! Whence, but from this, have arisen all those preposterous absurdities, which are so frequently to be met with under the name and garb of Religion? Delusions upon delusions have been multiplied, systems upon systems have been written, and books upon books published, which have had no other usefulness in them, than that of convincing the truly pious and humble soul, that they are all wrong, and that Christianity, or pure Religion, hath nothing to do with *Opinion*. Opinion is but opinion, when all is said, that can be said. *Vital Religion* alone is *truth*, and Religion and Truth are *one*—one, in substance—one, in essence—one, in manifestation—one, in life—one, in practice—blessedly subservient to every good purpose under heaven, and conducive to the comfort, and happiness, of man. Truth, can never be known by *learned Definitions*, *abstruse Reasonings*, *logical Argument*, and *human Wisdom*.—Truth, must be *lived*—it must be brought into life and holy obedience, before it can be felt, or *known* as such.—The heart (not the head) must speak to the heart, if ever any benefit is derived.—Human opinions are all lame—because opinion, is speaking, and arguing,
only

only from supposition, and thought, not from heart-felt experience, and living testimony.—Truth, alone, is religion; for truth is the internal evidence of the Great Redeemer's love and mercy to fallen man. It cannot, however, be divided; for, if it be founded in wisdom, it will be manifested by obedience, and a life of heavenly love, and charity, both to the Lord, and man. Our Lord, called himself, "The Truth," and manifested the living power thereof, by every act of mercy, and labour of love, to his lost creatures. Let the serious reader, then, ever attend more to the language and *evidence of the heart*, than to any *opinion*; and let him always follow, in his researches after such a truth, the example of Peter, of old, who said, "Lord, to whom shall we go?—thou hast the words of eternal life." Let him further remember, That he will never truly *know* any thing, which he doth not *love* so as to *practise* it; and that every Definition of religion, and of truth, is false, which hath not its foundation in love, and which doth not direct its services for general usefulness; being fruitful in good works, and in the perfect obedience of the divine commandments; according to those words, where it is written, "If any will *do his will*, he shall *know* of the *doctrine*, whether it be of God."

Might the author be permitted to judge of his own sincerity; and could he try, and prove, his own heart, without deceitfulness, and guile, he would charitably hope, that all his endeavours,

though weak, and imperfect, have been directed, through Divine favour, and mercy, to bring man to the *inward* knowledge and acknowledgment of this great, eternal truth, "That purity of heart, and a faithful obedience to the divine commandments, are the *one thing needful*, and the grand essential to salvation." To this declaration, he trusteth, every one will be enabled to bear a faithful testimony, who readeth the following pages without prejudice; and who readeth them, with an earnest desire, not only of *knowing*, but also of *practising*, the duties therein enjoined. To such, he doubteth not, his *doctrine* will be found *orthodox*, and pure, and his *definitions* of the sacred truths of the Lord's holy word, not *fanciful*, and *speculative*, but *real*, solid, substantial, and *practical*, having nothing therein of what is *false*, or *dangerous*, but only "the words of *soberness*, and *truth*."

Should the reader observe any expression, which appeareth severe against "a Barren Morality, a dead Faith, or mere External Forms," it is hoped he will not be too hasty, or rash, in judging. The author, by no means, wisheth to speak lightly of those *Established Forms*, with which he himself most willingly complieth, and in which he himself is engaged, or of those *Characters*, whose *office*, and *duty*, it is to administer therein.—All, that he wisheth to inculcate, is this,—"that *form*, without *life*, is of no avail, or service, before the Lord," but that, in order to receive any benefit therefrom, the wor-
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shipper should always behold the *life* within the *form*, as the *soul* within the *body*; or, in other words, He should always consider himself no better than an “*hypocrite, or idolater,*” when he conjoineth not the life with the form, nor endeavoureth, by holy obedience, to give *inward respectability* to *outward Rites, and Ordinances*.—Such, he doubteth not, is the sincere acknowledgment of many, whose duty it is to serve in such ordinances; with many of whom he is in habits of the most intimate friendship, and with some, whose piety is as exemplary, as their situation is exalted. Their kind attention he cannot but ever gratefully acknowledge; and whilst he laments, with them, those circumstances, which prevent a mutual interchange of kind offices, yet he is thankful, that he is enabled still to be united with them—in charity, in affection, and love.

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ERRATA.

Page 257, line 20—for, "*unchangeableness*,"—read, "*changeableness*."

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SERMON

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

I. EPISTLE JOHN, Chap. iv. Part of Ver. 16.

"GOD IS LOVE; AND HE, THAT DWELLETH IN LOVE,
DWELLETH IN GOD, AND GOD IN HIM."

OF all the reasons and objections, which the en-
quiring and well-disposed of all ages and na-
tions have advanced against the Gospel system, and
those blessed Truths, which the Holy Word of the
Lord contains, none seems to have been adduced
more frequently than this, that its most zealous advo-
cates, and its warmest adherents have differed so
much in their explanation, and illustration of it.
Hence they have been led to consider, and to con-
clude, that all was not right herein; hence they have
been led to consider it imperfect, and incomplete;
inasmuch as whilst each of its teachers have advanced
every passage, which favored his own particular sen-
timents and tenets, he hath uncharitably with-held
every proof, which appeared to militate against him;
and thus hath made the holy Truths of Unerring
Wisdom, and Eternal Life appear to contradict them-
selves. From this unfair practice, from this un-
christian principle, and this unhallowed spirit, all the

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various sects, all those heterogeneous births, and spurious race of doctrines have arisen, which have so long, and so fatally, distracted the world; and which cannot but disturb, and grieve every afflicted and distressed spirit, which is looking for other comforts than those of flesh and blood, until it is brought, through the divine favor and mercy, to exclaim in the language of St. Peter of old, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

To the spiritually enlightened philosopher these seeming contradictions afford the plainest evidence, and most incontestible proof, of the Holy Word being one grand, inseparable, and pure connection of the plainest, and most engaging precepts; inasmuch as every individual may find therein something suited to his own appetite and palate. Variety, or difference of opinion, is no solid ground for dispute. Let but the life be good, and all will be blessed; for we shall all be judged, not from what we have believed, but from what we have practised; and however we may vary in opinion, let us never forget, or neglect, the great and heavenly law of charity and love. Change and revolution is the natural consequence of every impure principle, and unregenerate heart. All outward disorder is from *within*, from the heart; for "out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these *evil* things come from *within*, and defile the man."—Would man, however, think seriously, and act prudently, for himself, through the divine aid and assistance, these infernal associates would soon be driven out; these evils would soon be removed, and their

their consequent miseries soon disappear, for "God is love; and he, that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Such are the words of the beloved Apostle of the Lord in my text. Surely he could not be mistaken. Doubtless he spake the truth. He spoke from the best evidence, the happy sensibility of his own blessed experience, from that endearing affection of all holiness, purity, and love, which flow from the Lord, and the Lord alone; and when he said, "God is love," he was enabled to declare this, because he himself "dwelled in love," and "he, that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him, for God is love."

St. John, we well know, was called the beloved Apostle. He was favored with a more intimate, and interior acquaintance, than the rest, with his divine master. He entered more than the rest into a state of the most tender communication with the Great Redeemer. He leaned on his breast at supper, that last, and holy emblem of the most exalted charity. He continued the only follower into the palace of the high priest, when Peter, the once bold, warm and positive Peter, had, alas! disowned, and denied him. To him the Lord committed the care of his mother, with these affecting and endearing words, "Behold thy mother." To him he unveiled the invisible mysteries, yet to him the eternal realities, of his future church and kingdom, and displayed to his purer vision the wonders of his wisdom and love.---Every disciple, indeed, corresponds to some principle or affection, to some truth, or state in man. It will be sufficient, therefore, to say, that by John is signified

the interior affection of a divine love; and as love is the fulfilling of the commandment, no wonder, that John is called "the beloved apostle," or, "the disciple, whom Jesus loved."

Having now endeavoured to prepare your understandings for a right conception and just comprehension, of the interesting, and important truths, contained in my text, let us proceed, and may we be enabled to prove,

First, That "God is love."

Secondly, point out, why Mankind in general cannot behold him, as a God of Love.

Thirdly, shew, how Man may be enabled to view him in that true and endearing Character, and to have conjunction with him, and that is by "dwelling in Love," for "he, that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Lastly, urge some persuasives to encourage us in an undertaking so necessary, in a labour so great, and a work so important; and may the God of all Love, the Father of all Mercies, and Prince of all Peace, incline all our hearts to receive his precepts, to hear for ourselves, "without partiality, and without hypocrisy," and so to hear, "that by patience, and comfort of his holy word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting happiness and eternal life."

"God is love!"---True, cries the superficial observer---nothing so clear, nothing so evident as this. Every thing around us proclaims this love, It was his love, which created us---it was his love, that watched over us in childhood---it was his love,
that

that brought us through youth to manhood—it is his love, that daily provides for us—it is his love, that hourly preserveth us—and I hope his love will at last conduct us to everlasting rest and peace.—Thus speaks the carnal man, who mechanically acknowledgeth with his tongue, that “God is love,” but feeleth no comfort arising from such declaration.

“God is love!”—True, cries the formal professor of a fruitless, and barren morality—who can call such a truth in question?—Hath he not left us laws and rules for the regulation and government of our conduct? Hath he not promised rewards and happiness, if we are honest, and sober, and industrious?—Surely this is “love.”

“God is love!”—True, cries the nominal believer in Jesus—I am fully persuaded of this; for besides his love in creating us, in watching over us, in daily providing for us, and hourly preserving us; what greater proof can we have of his love, than his sending his only begotten son into the world to suffer his wrath, and vengeance, to deliver his creatures from that wrath and vengeance; and lastly, his giving us “the Holy Ghost,” to be our “Comforter,” and guide?—Thus speaketh the nominal believer in Jesus; and as his argument and creed appear to be the argument and creed of the world at large, let us point out, how much such believers contradict themselves, and deny the declaration of the blessed Apostle in my text, who says, “God is love.”

“God is love?” how can that be, according to such a false, such an imperfect scheme, and system as this? How can God be a God of love, when he is represented

represented as burning with wrath against his creatures? how can love and wrath be the attributes of the same being? Is God changeable? Doth his love, and his mercy vary, and become wrath, and vengeance in himself? Poor, short-sighted reasoner! Human love may vary, as often it doth—human mercy may be withheld, or withdrawn, as often it is—but, surely, we cannot be so impious, as to entertain such an opinion of the God of heaven and earth, who himself hath told us by his prophet, “I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” St. James further assureth us, that a “fountain cannot at the same place send forth sweet water, and bitter;” that the “fig-tree cannot bear olive-berries, nor the vine figs:” How then can the Lord, who is the fountain of living waters, the source of all love, truth, mercy, goodness, charity, faith, meekness, humility, and every other amiable and divine perfection, be also the fountain of deadly waters, the source of all hatred, falsehood, unmercifulness, wickedness, uncharitableness, unbelief, self-exaltation, and pride, and every other impure, and infernal abomination? How can the Lord, who saith, “I am the vine,” that is the root of all holy truth, and divine wisdom, be said to produce only natural good, or natural truth produce celestial love? Surely this cannot be; for “whoever is a wise man, and endued with knowledge, must shew, out of a good conversation, his works with meekness of wisdom.” Our Lord himself also, in every part of his word, exhorteth us, and, in every action of his life, teacheth us, to lay aside all anger, and malice, and strife, inasmuch as they proceed from beneath, from the power and influence of Satan, darkness and death. How then can we endeavour to unite God with Belial, light with darkness,

love

love with hatred, and heaven with hell? How vain the supposition! How absurd the reasoning! How shocking the impiety! And how infernal the attempt!

Some, however, have gone still further, and impiously assert, that a God all mercy is a God unjust. Their narrow minds, their barren faith, their uncharitable hearts, would, confine the mercies of the Great God and Redeemer Jesus Christ to a partial redemption. They would condemn some, however amiable—they would save others, however unholy—they would doom the yet unsinching infant to eternal torments. Such are not the characteristics of a true christian, who is taught, that the “fulfilling of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.” Much mischief has been done by such tenets; as these; and much more may justly be expected, whilst men take up an hereditary faith, as they take up an hereditary name, or estate; and look up to preachers and preaching for illumination, and instruction, instead of approaching the Lord Jesus Christ, as the alone God, Regenerator, and Redeemer, and looking to them, and his holy word, only as the means of bringing them unto him.

“God is love!”—True, cries the enraptured adorer, who hath, through the divine blessing, been led to look further than an oral confession, a barren morality, a partial redemption, and a dead faith; who hath been enabled to feel the “powers of the world to come;” who hath looked through the letter of scripture to the inner meaning, and blessed power thereof; who hath found that “the word of the Lord is spirit and life;” who is an “Israelite indeed, in whom
there

there is no guile;" but who hath found and acknowledged, that the "Lord his God is one Lord;" and hath thus been led to "worship that Lord his God, with all his heart." Such a soul, and such an heart as this, is enabled to exclaim, "Gracious God and Redeemer, what thanks are due to Thee! Where shall my heart conceive, or my tongue utter, language, equal to my conceptions! Once I beheld thee as a God of wrath and vengeance, but now I see thee a God of mercy and love! Once I approached thee as my greatest tormentor, now I embrace thee as my happiness, my comforter, and friend; because I now know, by happy experience, that not thy holy nature, but my carnal heart, is changed; that not thy vindictive vengeance, but my evil affections and tempers are removed; and that thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Such is the confession of a true christian, who hath a right knowledge of himself, and his Redeemer; and such will be our confession, when we approach the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and obey his holy commandments.

"God is love." God is one. In the Old Testament he is frequently called the Redeemer. Now redemption is love. A God of wrath, therefore, is unreasonable. In the Old Testament, he is often called the Saviour. Now salvation is life. A God of vengeance, therefore, is unscriptural, because, as redemption and salvation tend to life eternal, which is from the Lord, and the Lord alone; so wrath and vengeance lead to death eternal, which is from the power of sin, and Satan alone. No man, if he rightly considers this, will ever endeavour to prove, that there is any anger in God. If mankind, indeed, will have more gods than one, they may form
and

and chuse for themselves such a God as will best suit their own imaginations. There is only one God, one Regenerator, one Lord, one Redeemer, and one Saviour. In the sacred scriptures Jesus is often called "The Son of God, the only Begotten of the Father;" and even in this character, how few were willing to receive him! How much less would he have been believed, had he declared himself to be the very God of heaven, and of earth! In Isaiah we are told, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Where then doth Jesus Christ prove himself to be all these? He is called Wonderful, when the "people wondered and marvelled at his words." He is called Counsellor, as being "The Way, The Truth, and The Life." He is called The Mighty God, because "none can forgive sins, but God alone." He is The Everlasting Father, because he himself hath said, "He, that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." He is the Prince of Peace, because the angels sung, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." St. Matthew calls him "Immanuel, God with us." Isaiah of old called him "Immanuel." St. John tells us, "The Word was God, and the Word became flesh, and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth." St. Paul saith in his 1st epistle, "God was manifest in the flesh." St. John further declares, that Jesus Christ is "the only true God, and eternal Life," and then adds, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols;" that is, keep yourselves from owning, acknowledging, believing in, and worshipping any other God, but the Lord

God the Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the only true God of heaven and earth.

When we behold God under this two-fold character of Creator, and Redeemer; when he is considered not only as the giver, and preserver of life, but also as the Redeemer and Restorer of that life, what heart but melts with gratitude, whilst it acknowledges, that "God is love." God is love, however, not only as Creator and Redeemer, but also as Holy Ghost and Comforter. Let us not use our own reason herein, but let us follow scripture, which is the best interpreter of scripture. It is said by St. John, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Our Lord himself said unto his disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come again unto you;" and again, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world;" and again, "He breathed on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost."

"God is love," therefore, not only as Creator, and Redeemer, not only as the giver, the preserver, and the restorer of life, but also as the Comforter of that life, and Jesus Christ, the manifested Jehovah is that one God of love, in whom is a blessed and ever-to-be-adored Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Father as to his divinity, the Son as to his humanity, and the Holy Ghost as to his operation, or divine proceeding. Oh! how amiable! how lovely! how divine! is so good a God as this! well may we exclaim with holy rapture, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints! Who shall not
fear

fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name; for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come, and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest."

Having now endeavoured to shew from scripture, that "God is love," that God is One, Almighty, Eternal, and Unchangeable; let us see how far we can reconcile ourselves from natural reasoning to acknowledge that "God is love," that "in him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," and that "his mercy endureth for ever."

We are all the workmanship of one heavenly father, we are all therefore, equally the objects of his care—we are all the children of one heavenly parent, we are all therefore equally the objects of his affection—we are all the creatures of one blessed God and Redeemer, we are all, therefore, equally the objects of his love; inasmuch as the apostle saith, "He sendeth rain, and causeth his sun to shine, both on the just, and on the unjust; and is kind to the unthankful, and the evil." What then can lessen this care, this affection, and this love of our almighty creator, our heavenly parent, and our blessed Redeemer, and God? Can our own blindness to, and ignorance of, our best interests? Can our own neglect of his most holy precepts? Can our own disobedience to his divine commandments? No. Hear his own tender expostulation, as the Redeemer of old, when he said by his prophet, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel: your sins have separated between you and me, wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye;" and again he himself saith, "I am not come to destroy the world, but to save the world;" and again,

"I am come, that ye may have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly; and lastly informeth us, for our comfort, that he is always using every possible means, consistent with our freedom, to bring us to happiness, when he saith, "Behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him; and will sup with him, and he with me."

Suppose an earthly parent had several children, who were all equally dear to him by the ties of blood, and paternal affection; should one of them unhappily oppose his will, reject his counsels, slight his admonitions, transgress his commands, and refuse his blessing; would the father of such child be excuseable, much less praise-worthy, if he neglected that child, if he persecuted him with hatred, if he brought him to punishment, and even took away his life; would such a parent be excuseable? You, that are parents, who have felt, and who do feel a parent's fondness and a parent's love---you, who may have experienced "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child," can best answer: Hath not the most tender anxiety, the most feeling sensibility, and most unutterable love, been awakened, at the prospect of their danger? Doubtless it hath. Would such a parent, then be excuseable? God forbid! Should he not rather pity his weakness? Should he not rather compassionate his folly? Should he not rather pardon his errors? Should he not rather endeavour to reclaim the lost, and hapless wanderer to a sense of his duty, and affectionately point out to him the means of being restored to happiness, and a sound mind? Doubtless, such should be, and such will be, the treatment of every parent, who hath a true affection

tion for his children; for their disobedience can never give a sanction to his hatred; their neglect can never justify his revenge; nor is he at liberty to withhold every feeling, and affection, and tie of a father, because they have forgotten, or neglected, or refused the duty and obedience of children, which he might justly expect.

Just so it is, beloved, with our Heavenly Father, with our affectionate parent, our blessed Redeemer, and our merciful God; whose mercies we have so often forgotten; whose providence we have so often called in question; whose love we have so often slighted; whose holy laws, and life-giving commandments we have so often violated; and whose goodness we have so often abused; so that each of us, from our own knowledge, from our own experience, and our own imperfect obedience herein, have just reason to exclaim with rapturous exultation, and thankful gratitude, to this heavenly parent, to this adorable Redeemer, to this all-merciful God, in the language of sacred poetry----

“Boundless Wisdom! Pow’r divine!

“Love unspeakable! are *Thine!*”

Having now endeavoured to shew both from scripture and right reason, that “God is love,” let us consider,

Secondly, Why Mankind in general, cannot behold him, and receive him as “a God of Love.”

The love of God is a pure, holy, unchangeable, and eternal love, giving health, comfort, satisfaction, blessedness

blessedness and Life Eternal to all, who receive it. The love of man is an impure, unholy, changeable, and short-lived love, bringing spiritual sickness, uneasiness, dissatisfaction, misery, and Death Eternal to all who abide therein. The love of God teacheth us, and enableth us to "love the Lord," first and above all things, "with all our heart." The love of man teacheth us, and prevaileth upon us, to love ourselves more than God; to love the things of this world better than those of heaven; to prefer time to eternity, hell to heaven; thus inverting every sacred injunction and commandment, and opposing, and changing, every process of holy truth, and holy love into infernal falsehood, diabolical hatred, and sin. Thus opposed to each other in nature, in quality, in duration, and essence, no wonder that mankind cannot behold, and approach the Great Redeemer as a God of love; because whatever is of God is contrary to their life, and the Lord, as being the All of Goodness, and the All of Love, appeareth to them full of anger, opposition, and wrath.

The sacred scriptures were all along written, and directed to the children of men, according to their states, or according to the quality of their spirits, or inner-man. Thus the prophets addressed those, to whom they were sent, according to the state of good, or evil, of truth, or error, in which they lived; always pointing out these awful truths; that an evil heart, and a darkened understanding prevented them from approaching, and acknowledging the Lord, as a God of love; and that nothing, but applying themselves to obtain that "wisdom, which is from above," and that "love" which is of God, could restore them to a sound understanding, and a pure heart. When
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man is in an evil, and consequently, in an unregenerate state, he looketh upon the Lord, as his greatest enemy, because the precepts which he inculcath, and the obedience, which he requireth, are directly contrary to his own carnal will, and fallen estate. Thus man beholdeth, as he imagineth, change, and alteration in God; whereas he himself hath told us by the prophet, that not "his ways, but our own ways, are unequal;" and then lovingly inviteth us to come, and return unto him.

Let us now, Thirdly, enquire, how man may be enabled to view him in the endearing character of love, and love alone, and this the apostle assureth us we may do, by "dwelling in love; for he, that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him; for God is love."

To "dwell in love," is to cultivate, and improve, through the divine blessing and mercy, every pure manifestation of truth, and wisdom, from the Lord. To "dwell in love," is to practise every degree of christian patience, christian humility, christian meekness, brotherly affection, and charity. To "dwell in love," is to dwell with the Lord, and to have the same mind, the same holy affections, and the same wisdom, "which was in Christ Jesus." This is to dwell in love, or as we express ourselves in the communion service, to "dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, to be one with Christ, and Christ with us."

Be it well observed, however, that this love must be constant, regular, uniform and pure; or as the original truly expresseth it, we must "abide in love." It will be accompanied, if sincere, with

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no sudden manifestations, no enthusiastic raptures, no mad zeal, no unhallowed fire, but it will be mild, as the God, from whence it flows; it will be gentle, as the opening spring; it will become all things to all men for good, that the Lord, and his kingdom may be exalted in the hearts and lives of the children of men.

The directions, therefore, to acquire this holy and heavenly love, are short, plain, and easy.---As for instance; am I under the influence of an impure spirit, and principle of evil, I must renounce this impurity, and this evil, for "God is pure and good."---Am I in a state of covetousness, I must part with this narrow spirit, for "God is liberal, and bountiful to all his creatures."---Am I in habits of revenge, I must learn to be "merciful, as our father, which is in heaven is merciful."---Am I addicted to pride, I must learn to be humble; for our Lord hath said, "He, that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."---Am I persecuted, I must learn to bear it with meekness, for our Lord's exhortation is, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your soul."---Am I uncharitable to my neighbour, I must put on "bowels of mercy," I must compassionate his miseries, and relieve his distresses, for "God is love." It is by cultivating such a spirit as this, and not a sectarian, ridiculing, and unholy temper, that we shall be enabled to behold, to approach unto, and to adore the Lord God the Saviour Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Redeemer, as a God of love; and experience, that our love is transformed from earthly to heavenly by the renewal of our minds; but that "his love is unchangeable, and without shadow of turning."

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To conclude. Whenever we look into, or read the sacred scriptures, or the holy word of truth, let us seek for our own character, and picture, in the description. Let us not judge God as our enemy, but consider ourselves as separated from him, and viewing him in an unpleasing light, because our lives are unholy, and our conduct evil. Let us reason thus with ourselves.—Whom do I consider as my greatest enemy? Surely God is not my enemy; for “God is love.” The disposition of an enemy is to enslave.—God cannot be my enemy, because he desireth to set me at liberty from my worst foes. It is the intention of a revengeful enemy to destroy life.—God cannot be my enemy; inasmuch as He became Incarnate, to redeem, to restore, and to establish, that which was fallen, in bondage, and lost. God cannot be my enemy—for “God is love.” It is the principal aim of an enemy to weaken, and to impoverish his opponent.—God cannot be my enemy, for he seeketh to strengthen, and enrich me daily with his mercies and favours. If man would reason thus with himself, he would soon find, that all evil, and misery are, and proceed from, the darkened state of his own understanding, and the impure love of his own heart; which not being given up to, and employed in, the service of the Lord his God, his only sure strength, and Redeemer, in the time of trouble, are the perpetual sources of inquietude; feeding their own wrathful, and infernal nature; and subjecting man to the assaults, and dominion of the powers of darkness, death, and hell.

May we all, beloved, seriously meditate on these things; for nothing can deliver us from the body of sin and death, but our surrendering our

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wills, and all our powers, to the guidance, government, and direction of that God and Redeemer, whose name is Jesus Christ, whose essence is love, whose every manifestation, or appearance, is love, and as the Royal Psalmist saith, "whose tender mercies are over all his works." If adversity with iron hand oppress us, let us not murmur, for "God is love." If afflictions overwhelm us, let us not repine, for "God is love." If spiritual foes attack us, let us not flee before them; God will help us, for "God is love." If we have hitherto neglected, and been forgetful of, our duty, let us not despair, let us return with sincere repentance.----The tender father will recognize the long-lost child.----The God of all mercy will embrace the returning prodigal; for "God is love." If death approacheth, when "the wheel at the cistern will with difficulty turn round," let us put our trust in the Almighty. He will guide us through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and bring us to the eternal realities of a spiritual and celestial world; for "God is love," for Heaven is love, and all its enjoyments holy, pure, unfading, and delightful. To the Great Redeemer, Jesus Christ, to the Incarnate Jehovah, to the God of love let us then immediately apply; to him and to him alone, let us devote our future service, and to him alone ascribe Everlasting Praise, Dominion and Glory, both now and for ever.

SERMON II.

PSALM ix. Ver. 9.

"THE LORD ALSO WILL BE A REFUGE FOR THE OPPRESSED,
A REFUGE IN TIMES OF TROUBLE."

WHEN we for a moment consider, and reflect upon the numberless vicissitudes of human life, we cannot but acknowledge, that it is pregnant with misfortune, abundant in misery, and surrounded with death. Wherever we turn our enquiring eyes, wherever we direct our creative fancy, we can scarce penetrate the darksome gloom, or perceive the least glimpse of comfort through the awful shade. Distressed, yet unknowing where to find relief, mankind wander through the dreary wilderness; no friendly hand appears stretched out to alleviate their sorrows; no song of sympathy can cheer their fallen spirits; nature has lost her sweets, pleasure her enchantments; and the world its joys. Whence, it may be asked, originates this malady; whence proceed these mournful troubles? Whence?---but from that inverted order of every heavenly and divine blessing? Whence?---but from that source of evil, which was introduced by the fall, and which still continues, the lot, and portion of every descendant of Adam; and will for ever remain, till that order, that harmony, and that purity is restored, which was the life of

Paradise, the manifestation of Heaven, and the abode of God. Such appears to have been the opinion of the Psalmist, an opinion, founded upon experience, and uttered with all the endearing tenderness of gratitude in the words of my text, where he says, "The Lord also will be a Refuge for the oppressed, a Refuge in times of trouble." Let us not, however, depend alone upon his assertion, but let us bring the affair home to our own observation, and our own experience; whilst we endeavour to shew,

First, What is meant by a "Refuge;"

Secondly, In what sense, "the Lord is a Refuge," "The Lord also will be a Refuge;"

Thirdly, Enquire, who are the "Oppressed," "The Lord also will be a Refuge for the Oppressed;"---And

Lastly, Prove, how "The Lord is," in a particular manner, "a Refuge for the Oppressed in the times of trouble."

First, then, let us enquire, what is meant by "a Refuge."

By "Refuge," is meant a place of security, and safety, to which we may retire, when we are no longer able to maintain our ground. It signifies further a situation, not only free from danger, but capable of affording comfort, and ease, to those, who have been persecuted, and distressed; inasmuch as no man will look for such "a Refuge," till he finds himself insecure, and unsafe, in his present state. A place of "Refuge," therefore, is a place of strength, furnished with every necessary supply for the defence, the nourishment, and support of those, who have fled to it.

it. This Refuge, however, is in a country, or kingdom, separate from, independant of, and different to, the country, or kingdom, from which the persecuted are fled. The country, or kingdom, therefore, from which they come, is that of an enemy, wishing, and striving to injure, to ruin, and undo those, that have left it. This enemy, nevertheless, is inferior in strength to him, to whom the afflicted have had recourse, otherwise it would be no "Refuge," or secure retreat, but would be constantly exposed and subject to the fury of the oppressor. Hence, then, may be seen what is meant by a spiritual Refuge, viz. a deliverance, or secure retreat from all the assaults of evil, and the powers of darkness; and a safe abode, and happy dwelling in the city of the Almighty. With respect to the things of this world, whatever can shield, and protect, and defend, can only shield, protect, and defend for a moment: The most solid comforts are but fading, the most lasting joys transient; and the most endearing satisfactions momentary. Thunder, and lightning, storms and tempests, afflictions, and misfortunes, sickness, and sorrow, disease and death soon remove the most substantial barriers, and leave nothing behind, but the bitter reflection of having trusted in uncertain objects, which have only encreased our mortification, and aggravated our distress. But the Refuge, which can avail us any thing in the hour of trial is the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose defence is sure, and whose mercies never fail.

Let us proceed, therefore, Secondly to shew, in what sense "the Lord is a Refuge."

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The state of man by nature is only carnal, earthly, sensual, and devilish. Every faculty, and every principle of his heart, and life are open to, and receptive of, only such things, and such enjoyments, as are agreeable to such an earthly, carnal, and sensual nature. Under the influence, therefore, of such depravity, no wonder, that he is exposed to, and assaulted by, every spirit, and power of darkness, and misery; no wonder, that they operate in, and through every part of his being; no wonder, that they encrease, and further, the growth of their own sphere in his affections; no wonder, that they eradicate every ray of truth and life from his bosom; no wonder, that they destroy every impression of goodness; and bring every thought, word, and action into subordination, and obedience to the dominion of evil. This is a species of the most oppressive bondage; this is the most afflictive slavery, and the most bitter yoke. Under this bondage, however, mankind are but too apt to sink---their resolution becomes timidity, their courage cowardice, and their hearts faint. Earthly are their affections, earthly their miseries, and to earthly objects they have recourse for help. Vain supposition! delusive expectation! and disappointed hope! How can these objects, which have produced, remove the distress? Nature is but finite---their wants eternal! Nature is but earthly---their comforts should be spiritual! Nature unrenewed is but mere evil---their deliverer should be the Lord! The Lord, therefore, in whom all perfection centers, can alone be their Refuge. Are they weak, and their foes many?---his arm is mighty, and his power great! Are they fallen, and grievously tormented? ---he can raise them up, and administer consolation!

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Are their wants numberless?---so are his mercies! Are their griefs many?---so are his comforts! In him is centered every thing, that can relieve. He is wise, and holy, and just, and good---He is merciful, and bountiful, and pure, and great. His treasures are boundless---his comforts unfading---and his blessings ever new. Such are the perfections, and attributes of him, who is our Friend, and Protector, our Guardian, and God, our Refuge and Defence; whilst every qualification of the adversary is agreeable to his nature. Justly, therefore, is the Lord called a Refuge; inasmuch as in him is united every comfort, every virtue, and every good.

Let us now proceed, Thirdly, to shew, who are meant by the "Oppressed."

Difficult it would be, indeed, to point out, individually, who are meant by the "Oppressed;" inasmuch as every one has his own peculiar wants, which require a remedy, suitable, and peculiar to his own particular state. We are apt to affix the character of "Oppressed" to every one, who is labouring under any trial, trouble, or affliction, which appears grievous to be borne. Thus we call the man, who has met with worldly disappointments, and losses, "Oppressed;" giving the name of oppression to every incident, which opposes our views, or disappoints our wishes. We should do well, however, to remember, that the divine administration, and providence of the Lord have nothing of oppression in them; being the acts, and operations of infinite wisdom, goodness, and love; and therefore, totally incapable of injuring, distressing, or grieving any of his intelligent creatures. "God is love."

love." Love, however, cannot torment, being entirely opposite to a spirit of suffering. Oppression, then, must be something, which does not partake of the nature of divine love, but is contrary to, and subversive of it. The Oppressed are those, who are under the dominion of a fallen, and inverted life, and spirit; and who, seeing, and feeling, the misery, and distress of such a life, are desirous to be delivered from it. Nature, however, cannot effect this. Nature unrenewed, will but encrease our oppression: The Lord alone must relieve us, and be our "Refuge."

Let us now proceed, Lastly, to shew, how the Lord is, in a particular manner, "a Refuge" for the Oppressed in the times of trouble."

By trouble, when applied to the soul, or spirit of man, is signified, temptation, and by "times of trouble" is signified the various states of temptation, which the true christian passes thro' in the regeneration. Let us but carefully attend to this grand, and fundamental truth, and we shall at one view behold the amiable tenderness, the never-ceasing care, and the boundless love of the Lord, who never afflicteth, never distresseth, never grieveth his creatures, but is always labouring, by a variety of means, to bring them from the darkness of error, to the light of truth, from the love of this world to the love of himself, and from self-love to the love of our neighbour. Men have erroneously, and unhappily attributed to the Lord all the passions, affections, principles, and desires of our fallen, sinful, and impure nature. They have represented him as capable of encouraging, and manifesting a spirit of anger, malice,

lice, resentment, and the like; making him changeable, fickle, and capricious like themselves. They have described him, as pouring vengeance upon his deluded, and miserable creatures; without tenderness, without mercy, compassion, or love; thus removing the burden from their own shoulders, thus casting all the blame, not upon their own carnal hearts, and natures, but upon the pure, kind, forgiving, and amiable quality of the divine being. Should this, indeed, be the case---should there be any anger in God---the text would contradict itself in asserting that "The Lord is a Refuge for the Oppressed in the times of trouble;" inasmuch as it would be expressly declaring, that their oppressor was their deliverer, that their enemy was their friend, and their destroyer their saviour.

beloved, old, dear, &c. I have been told of
 Temptation, or the "times of trouble," mentioned in my text; are those states of the soul, or spirit, wherein the light of truth begins to dawn upon the darkened understanding, discovering to it its deplorable situation, and the warmth of love begins to dart upon the cold, and barren heart. From this discovery proceeds spiritual temptation, or a struggle between the two natures; each of which endeavours to produce its own birth, and offspring in the agonizing and labouring breast. In this state, the soul is, indeed "oppressed" with pangs unutterable, and full of woe: the demons of misery begin to dread the downfall of their empire, and the destruction of their influence over the half-delivered spirit; and rage and swell with redoubled fury. 'Tis then the tormented soul begins to cleave to its deliverer, and fly to him as its refuge---No more does it behold him as its enemy, and the destroyer of its

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peace—no more does it deceive itself with self-invented arguments, or sophisticated reasoning, but views every thing through the simple mean of unadorned truth. It then beholds its real interest. It is no longer averse to its best comforts; but is able to distinguish its safety from its destruction, its preserver from its foe, and its Redeemer, from its destroyer. Happy, indeed, if it holds fast its integrity! Happy, indeed, if it lives in its God!

Oh! how comfortable are these truths to every afflicted mourner in Zion! Oh! how endearing to such are these words of the Psalmist, "The Lord also will be a Refuge for the Oppressed, a Refuge in the times of trouble."

To conclude. It is highly probable, beloved, that most of us have heretofore entertained unjust ideas of the Divine Being. It is highly probable, that, when the tide of passion has run high; when the fallen life has met with opposition from the Divine Spirit, that we have considered the Lord as our "Oppressor," and greatest foe. Let us, however, rest assured, that nothing can oppress us, but sin; and that nothing can be our "Oppressors," but an evil heart, and an evil life. It may, perhaps, with propriety be asked, "Whence then does evil arise?" I answer, "From our willing obedience to the powers of darkness, whose baneful influence enters our every affection and principle, and introduces spiritual poison into the whole of man." Eager to disturb, eager to distress, and eager to destroy, they afflict the apparently-forsaken spirit, but oftentimes frustrate, and make void their intentions; for the afflicted and disconsolate sinner, having no other alternative, be-
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takes itself to the Lord, as its "Refuge," and becomes happy thereby. Fear not, then, thou afflicted, and tossed with tempests! What! though thou art a child of Sorrow, Inquietude, and Grief!—What! though thy faculties are impaired, thy spirits sunk, and thy powers fallen—Be not discouraged—These are but the fore-runners of better days—The wintry blast is necessary to destroy the noxious weed—The piercing wind is useful to purify the infected atmosphere! What! though thou art oppressed!—thy God is not thy oppressor—He is only labouring to restore thee to a sound mind, to comfort, to happiness, to rest, and peace. Thy evils oppress thee. Thy misery proceeds from beneath. Thy carnal nature produceth death—But "the Lord will be thy Refuge," and he, that dependeth upon him, will never fall. Darkness, and disquietude, and pain, and grief, are the only inlets, through which the light, and comfort, and ease, and joy of Heaven can enter the renewed heart, and make it blest; and the bosom, which has never experienced these vicissitudes, can feel nothing but the horrors of an unrenewed, and infernal spirit.

It is probable most of us have experienced natural griefs, and bodily "Oppressions;" but alas! what can they avail! They can reach only the limits of nature, and are then no more! But which of us hath experienced spiritual "Oppression," and, in consequence thereof, have made the Lord our "Refuge?" Which of us hath experienced a "time of trouble;" a time, when the wounded spirit has groaned with sorrows unutterable; when the active mind has lost its vivacity, and forgot to discharge its office? Miserable is our condition, indeed! if we

have not thus died to every earthly comfort, before we can receive, and enjoy the comforts of Heaven!

In natural disquietude, man may relieve our burthen, and comfort our bodies. He cannot, however, ease the agonies of the mind—That is the prerogative of the Lord alone, whose refreshing is that of the Spirit; and whose blessed influence, when admitted by us into our hearts, can heal every malady, and every pain both bodily, and spiritual, both temporal, and eternal. Let this, then encourage us all, to flee, in all our trials, to the Lord, as our only sure "Refuge," inasmuch as "the Lord also will be a Refuge for the Oppressed, a Refuge in the times of trouble."

And O Merciful, and Compassionate Saviour, in all our afflictions, let thy Blessed Spirit guide us! When our minds are disturbed, and our faculties impaired, let thy refreshing comforts cherish, and revive us! Let thy pure nature, thy patient resignation, thy submissive meekness, thy forgiving tenderness, thy fervent charity, and thine unbounded love so influence our hearts, that following the steps of thy most holy, and divine life, we may experience the satisfactions, which thy presence afford; and be enabled from a thorough conviction, and happy conversion, to assert for ourselves, that "Thou art our Refuge, in our Oppression, and a Refuge in the times of trouble."

The Parable of the Prodigal, of which my text is a part, is one of the most simple, yet comprehensive lessons of instruction, which the Word of God contains; inasmuch as it includes every thing which can befall man, either natural, or spiritual, and bears directly upon the heart of every sinner, and every hypocrite, and every ungodly man.

SERMON III.

St. LUKE, Chap. xv. Ver. 17, 18, 19.

"AND WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF, HE SAID, HOW MANY HIRED SERVANTS OF MY FATHER'S HAVE BREAD ENOUGH, AND TO SPARE, AND I PERISH WITH HUNGER! I WILL ARISE, AND GO TO MY FATHER, AND I WILL SAY UNTO HIM, FATHER, I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HEAVEN, AND BEFORE THEE, AND AM NO MORE WORTHY TO BE CALLED THY SON: MAKE ME AS ONE OF THY HIRED SERVANTS."

TO look into the folly, misery, wretchedness, and sin of the thoughtless, the dissipated, and the wicked, and from a view of their irregularities to pursue a quite different conduct, is the characteristic of a sound understanding, and true wisdom. The best knowledge, which we can attain to, is the knowledge of ourselves, of our own hearts, and spirits; and the best glass, or mirrour, which can shew us the vanity, emptiness, and fallacy of deceiving ourselves, is the deplorable condition of those, who are suffering the bitterness of anguish, the pangs of disappointment, and the torment of want, through an improper use of those abilities, and comforts, with which the God of love had abundantly blessed them. Painful, however, as the view may appear, it is absolutely necessary; and the prospect, however unpromising in the beginning, will be profit in the end.

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The Parable of the Prodigal, of which my text is a part, is one of the most simple, yet comprehensive lessons of instruction, which the Word of God contains ; inasmuch as it includes every thing, which can befall man, either natural, or spiritual, and beautifully points out to him, how he may avoid both natural indigence and misery, and spiritual pain, and grief.

Let us, therefore, endeavour to benefit ourselves, by considering,

First, What is meant by "coming to himself;" "and, when he came to himself, he said:"

Secondly, What is meant by "hired servants," and what by having "bread enough, and to spare;" "How many hired servants of my Father have bread enough, and to spare; whilst I perish with hunger."

Thirdly, What is meant by "arising and going to his Father," and humbling himself before him, by an acknowledgment of his own unworthiness to be his son; "I will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

The subject is of infinite importance to each of us, inasmuch as it is to be feared, much of the former part of the prodigal's character belongs to each of us. Let me, then, bespeak your most serious attention to this latter part of it, that, like him, you may "come to yourselves," and be received with joy into your father's house. And may the Lord dispose all our hearts

hearts for the reception, and praftice of these great, and important truths.

First, let us consider what is meant by "coming to himself;" "and, when he came to himself, he said."

"To come to himself," we all know, implies a return, or recovery from a state of sickness, or insensibility, to a state of health, or a sound mind. When we read these words, therefore, "And, when he came to himself, he said," we naturally, and justly conclude, that he had been "absent from himself," that is, an utter stranger to his lost estate, and condition, whilst he was squandering away his patrimony, and securing to himself only the inheritance of poverty, and misery, the baneful legacy of carelessness, and folly.

Such, we are well assured, had been his condition. He had received from his heavenly parent "the portion of goods, which belonged unto him;" even the blessed treasures of the divine love, and truth of the Lord, which would have made him happy both in time, and in eternity. But, alas! he knew not his true interest, his real good; for, "in a few days, he gathered all together, and journeyed into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land: and he began to be in want. And he went, and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks, which the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him."

If we behold these occurrences in a natural point of view; if we consider them only as relating to the things of time, and sense, yet they are awful, dismal, and deplorable indeed! The picture is fairly and accurately drawn. It was designed, and finished by Divine Wisdom itself, and consequently must be true. Perhaps, like our modern fashionable men of the world, he had given in to every species of gaiety, and pleasure; perhaps, like our modern Epicures, he had placed all his happiness in riot, intemperance, and excess. Probably he had been surrounded with numbers of flattering sycophants, who praised his generosity, and admired his taste; probably he had been eaten up by men, who ridiculed him in secret, and foresaw, though they hastened, his ruin. Certainly they abandoned him, when they knew he could support them no longer; certainly they disowned him, when poverty was his lot. He had spent his property---and he had lost his friends. Slavery, and that of the lowest degree, was his last resource. He desired only "the husk which the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him."---Deluded Prodigal! what condition can be compared to thine! Dost thou look back upon thy former circumstances, what a change is this! Dost thou apply to thy former companions, they do not know thee! Grief, madness, and despair, perhaps, have taken possession of thee! Perhaps, thou hast cursed thyself---perhaps, thou hast cursed thy God---perhaps, (Gracious Heaven!) perhaps thou hast lifted up thine arm against thy own life---perhaps the dagger was in thy hand---perhaps the point was fixed to thy bosom---But, thanks be to the Father of Mercies! thou "camest then to thyself," and wast preserved.

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Let us all, beloved, apply this to ourselves; and if the description belongs to any of us, may the Lord enable us in time to remove our distresses, before they bring us to utter destruction!

If we behold, however, the foregoing description of the Prodigal in its true and spiritual light, we shall see it equally calculated to shew man the true nature of his spiritual prodigality, and spiritual want.

By the young man receiving his "portion of goods, is signified, in a spiritual sense, his receiving from the Lord the Goods, and Truths, or the Love, and Wisdom of the Lord, which are called, in scripture, "Goods, or Good Things." The enjoyment of these "Goods, or Good Things," however, can only be had, and experienced in that "country," or kingdom, to which they are adapted, and for the use of which they are given. The "country," therefore, or kingdom, for the use, and service of which these "goods" are given, is the "country," or kingdom of the Heavenly Canaan, the New Jerusalem, in which alone man can be fed, nourished, rejoice, and be happy; inasmuch as it is the alone "country," or kingdom, of pure delights, of solid comforts, of unceasing happiness, and eternal love. By the Prodigal's leaving his own "country," and "taking his journey into a far country," we may well understand is signified, his leaving the pure love, and truth of the Lord, and entering into the impure love, and error of this world, and the flesh. Nothing is so opposite as these two loves; nor any thing so contrary as the interests, the practices, and pursuits of these two opposite kingdoms. When he left his

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own "country," therefore, he no longer acknowledged his allegiance, his fidelity, or his attachment to his own sovereign; he no longer considered himself bound to the observance of those laws, customs, and manners, which his own "country" followed; he no longer could view it, as the only "Sure Dwelling," the blessed "Land of Promise," the abode of comfort, or the "House of the Lord;" he no longer relished those precepts, in which love to the Lord, charity to man, resignation under misfortunes, patience under afflictions, meekness under injuries, humility under rebukes, rejoicing in tribulations, and blessings for cursings, were inculcated; he no longer desired to be directed, and governed by Unerring Wisdom, and unutterable Love, but by his own propriety, or self-love, which, though it amused him for a moment, would bring him, in the end, to sorrow, to misery, to wretchedness, and shame. Thus he departed into a far "country, a "country" as far separated from his own, as earth is from heaven; inasmuch as he could never enter into that "country," or kingdom, till he had first paid his allegiance to its sovereign, nor could he abide, or remain therein, unless he paid a due observance to its laws, its customs, and its manners. Now the riches, and treasures of these two countries were as far different, as the tempers of their respective kings, or the nature, quality, and tendency of their respective laws, customs, and manners. The riches of the one consisted in what was short-lived, and perishing, the riches of the other in what was durable, and eternal. No wonder, then, when he had withdrawn himself from his own "country," where every thing tended to life, to blessedness, to wealth, and peace, that he found himself soon in a state of want; and experienced
a famine

a famine in that country, where he dwelt, and where every thing tended to death, to misery, to poverty, and woe. He had not, however, experienced yet the full measure of his troubles; for, "he went, and joined himself with a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks, that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him."

By his "going, and joining himself with a citizen of that country," is signified his imbibing those falses, and loving those evils, which the natural man, or the unregenerate heart of man, which is meant by "citizen of that country," receives, and admits. The propriety of this observation will better appear, when we consider what office, or what occupation was assigned to him, which we are informed was that of "feeding swine."

By "swine," when mentioned in scripture, is ever signified the most sensual, or the lowest principle, and most inordinate affections in man; as where it is written, "The sow is turned again to her wallowing in the mire." To "feed swine," therefore, signifies, to feed, nourish, and support every fallen, sinful affection, principle, and lust; and to "desire to be fed with the husks, that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him," signifies, that he expected to be satisfied and happy in these sinful pleasures, but they would avail him nothing; for "no man gave unto him," that is, no life, no truth, no love was therein; and where there is no life, no truth, no love, there is no man; inasmuch as these constitute the true, real, and living man; therefore it is said, "no man gave unto him."

No wonder, when he had experienced, how frail, and how delusive the pleasures of this world and the flesh are; no wonder, when he was brought thus low, when no other door appeared open to him; when his eyes were thus opened, and he "came to himself," that he exclaimed in tears of penitence, and true contrition, "How many hired servants of my Father have bread enough, and to spare; and I perish with hunger!"

Let us now consider, Secondly, What is signified by "hired servants," and what by having "bread enough, and to spare."

When a man is in a state of spiritual goodness and truth, he is then called a "Son, or Heir" of the Lord; but when he is only in a state of natural goodness, and truth, separate from a spiritual one, he is then called an "hired servant." The spiritual man, or the spiritual principle in man, is intended by the Lord to be ruler over, or to have dominion over the natural man, or the natural principle in man. It is on this proper subordination, that man's everlasting happiness depends; inasmuch as the natural man, if he had the dominion, would destroy every principle of true life, and introduce nothing but eternal death. When man, therefore, acts according to this rule; when he suffers the things of God to have the first place in his affections, and the things of nature only the second, he then acts according to divine order, and the natural principle is called an "hired servant."

When the Prodigal, therefore, exclaimed,
 "How many hired servants of my Father's have bread

bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger !” He seemed to say---

“ I now see the melancholy, and deplorable
 “ state, to which my folly has reduced me. My
 “ Heavenly Father had given me the means of being
 “ his son, and child---He liberally appointed me a
 “ patrimony, by a proper management of which I
 “ might have been both rich, and happy. But, alas!
 “ I have dissipated my property ; I have left my
 “ own, and am now in an enemy’s country ; I have
 “ lost all the blessings, which I enjoyed : I have now
 “ no means of subsisting ; even the filthy husks are
 “ denied me, whilst my Father’s hired servants have
 “ bread enough, and to spare. Though not ad-
 “ vanced to spiritual goodness, and truth, though not
 “ entitled to the higher favors of my Father ; they
 “ are in natural good, and according to such a state
 “ they are supported with every comfort, “ they have
 “ bread enough, and to spare ;” whilst I, who am
 “ fallen into the lowest depths of iniquity, am pe-
 “ rishing with hunger ! But I will not yet despair ;
 “ for “ I will arise, and go to my Father, and will
 “ say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Hea-
 “ ven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to
 “ be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired
 “ servants.”

Let us now, Thirdly, consider, What is meant
 by “ arising, and going to his Father,” &c.

When man is in darkness and sin, he is said to
 be fallen ; inasmuch as he is then a slave to the
 lowest gratifications, and most impure desires ; but,
 when he renounces that darkness, and sin, and is de-
 sirable

sirous to be delivered from its power, he is then said to "arise." When the returning Prodigal, therefore, arose, we are to understand, that he renounced his former irregularities, and his sinful life; and when he went to his Father, he put those resolutions in practice; otherwise they would have been of no avail, or service. Thus he humbled himself under a sense of divine mercy; acknowledged his having transgressed the commandments of his Father; and supplicated not for the comforts, not for the communications of his Father's children, but only for the support of one of his servants. The returning Prodigal was again received---the Father embraced, and blessed him, and restored him again to riches, to blessings, to happiness and joy.

To conclude. To which of us, beloved, will not this Parable of the Prodigal apply? Which of us hath not thus left our own land, and gone into a "far country?" Which of us hath not departed from the kingdom of the pure love, and truth of the Lord? Which of us hath not imprudently spent his patrimony in riotous living? Which of us is not now reduced to "feed swine," to feed the impure affections of our fallen life and spirit? But, above all, which of us, is "come to himself?" Which of us hath formed the happy resolution of returning to our Father's house; earnestly repenting of our former irregularities, and humbly imploring even the least of his mercies? Such a process is, however, needful---Such resolutions must be formed---Such repentance must be practised---Such an acknowledgment must be made, from an inward sensibility of our danger, and want; otherwise, we shall still remain in a "far country," far from the kingdom of heavenly love,
and

and truth, from the Lord, "feeding only" our impure affections, which will at last bring us to eternal misery, condemnation, and death. May we all, then, from a view of our own condition, immediately arise, and go to our Father, and say, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: Make me as one of thy hired servants."

SERMON

SERMON IV.

St. JOHN, Chap. xii. Ver. 32.

"AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL
DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME."

IN every part of the sacred scriptures, or Word of the Lord, we find Divine Goodness delineated, and Divine Truth proclaimed. There is not a single part or portion of it, which is not replete with heavenly instruction; and the most apparently trifling descriptions are often the most interesting, and comfortable to the serious, and enquiring mind. Amongst the passages of Holy Truth, which are the most essentially necessary to be understood, none seems to me more generally to be misunderstood than the words in my text. They are usually considered, as referring solely to the crucifixion of the Redeemer, or as the elevation of the outward body upon that cross, to which it was nailed: and the words of the blessed Apostle in the verse following my text tend to confirm this natural explanation; where it is written, "This he said, signifying what death he should die." It is by reading the word of truth according to this natural understanding, that men have lost the true sense of those divine pages, which were written for their instruction, edification, and

and comfort in the spiritual, or divine life, considering them only as natural words, or natural truths, whereas Our Lord himself assures us, that "his words are spirit, and life," clothed thus with a natural body, and adapted thus to the natural understanding, that mankind might "gradually, and as they were able to bear it," search into, and unfold the blessed treasures, which were therein contained. The various states, and process of suffering, which the Divine Redeemer passed through from the manger to the cross, were accomplished as combats with, and conquests over, every power of sin, darkness, misery, death, and hell, whereby his humanity was made purely divine, and glorified; a possibility laid open to fallen man again to approach unto, and be happy in his God; and a lesson of instruction was thus delivered unto him, that he must undergo the same process of temptation, suffering, affliction, and death, that he might be purified from all his evils, and falsehoods, and become happy in the kingdom of his Lord.

To those, who can thus scripturally, and spiritually apply the words of my text, they will appear the words of sound reason, as well as the genuine truths of Eternal Wisdom, and Everlasting Life: To those, who can see them only in the letter, they cannot but appear comfortable, and pleasing, when they are told, that every outward manifestation of Our Lord's life was the true correspondence and real representation of some internal, and divine act.

Having premised thus much, let us endeavour to illustrate the words of my text by considering,

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First,

First, Who is the character here mentioned, and what is signified by I, "and I;"

Secondly, What is meant by his being lifted up from the earth, "if I be lifted up from the earth;" And

Thirdly, How, by his being lifted up from the earth, "he will draw all men unto him."

First then, let us consider, Who is the character here mentioned, and what is signified by I, "and I."

Names in scripture are always expressive of some quality, property, or principle in the person, or thing so named. The person, or character, here mentioned, is no other than the Eternal Jehovah, the Manifested God, and Redeemer, the Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ; and the quality, property, or principle to be derived, or proceeding from him, is no other than that of Love, Mercy, Goodness, Wisdom, Redemption, and Salvation to all, who are willing, and desirous to receive it. It is according to this rule of explanation, that all the properties of love, meekness, and the like, which are true redemption, are applied to Our Lord, as where it is written, "I am the good shepherd, and lay down my life for the sheep," expressing his love and affection for his true disciples; again it is said by St. John, "Behold the Lamb of God," and again by Isaiah, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," signifying his meekness, his innocence, and patient endurance of affliction; and again he is called, as containing all the powers, and being himself all the Fulness of Redemption, "The Lord, our Righteousness." These
few

few instances may be sufficient to shew us, that by Jesus Christ is ever signified the Redeeming Power of Heavenly Love and Truth, whereby alone man can be redeemed, and regenerated, and become a partaker of eternal life.

Now as the Lord is nothing in himself, but Goodness, and Truth, and as nothing is useful, or available to salvation, but this love and wisdom, this goodness and truth; it is doubtless necessary, that man should avail himself of this offered love and wisdom; inasmuch as upon his own exertion and choice herein depends his final state of everlasting misery or bliss. Which brings us to consider,

Secondly, What is meant by his being "lifted up from the earth;" "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth."---The subject, beloved, is of infinite importance; may we, therefore, look to the Lord for his blessing and guidance herein, that it may be useful and profitable unto us!

"To lift up," we all know, signifies to elevate, to exalt, or to raise any thing, or object, to a higher place, or situation. In this sense, therefore, we behold the divine goodness of the Lord, who hath made our blessedness to depend upon that, which must ever be our greatest satisfaction, and comfort, even the raising, or "lifting up" his heavenly love, and truth in us. Man in his present natural state is full of evil, and error; his will immersed in sin, and misery, and his understanding darkened with ignorance, and falsehood. His love is of an earthly, sensual, and fallen nature; inclined to follow the gratification of an impure life, and spirit; improvident of

future comforts, and regardless of future wants. His understanding is equally dark, overclouded, and obscure ; his intellectual sight can view only the objects around him, and his mental eye can penetrate no deeper than nature, and her short-lived prospect. No wonder, then, that in such a state, we behold him with a look of tender compassion ; no wonder, that in such a condition, we cry out in the bitterness of anguish, " Fall'n ! fall'n ! fall'n ! " indeed, " from his high estate," in which his God had placed him ; no wonder that we exclaim in mournful accents, " Total Eclipse of Spiritual Vision ! "----No " Sun of Righteousness " shining on his soul !----No " Day-star from on high visiting him ; " but total darkness, and perpetual night !

If such be the picture of the natural man, if such be a faithful picture----and no one, I trust, will call it in question----of an unregenerate heart and will ; if such be the unexaggerated description of an unenlightened understanding ; surely man, in such a condition, must be far, very far indeed, from his God, and stand in need of his help and assistance to raise him from this low estate, into his own blessed, and exalted kingdom of light, love, and peace.

Such help, and such assistance the God of unutterable love and mercy hath liberally and abundantly provided for his creatures. His Universal Spirit is every-where diffusing its salutary influence, its enlightening beams, and its refreshing warmth, and heat ; restoring sight to the blind ; health to the sick ; comfort to the afflicted ; liberty to the captive ; strength to the weak ; courage to the desponding ; and life eternal, to those, who were dead

dead in trespasses, and sins. But we shall all of us do well, beloved, to reflect, that these comforts can only so far be administered to us, as we feel our want of them, and make a proper use of the means, whereby they may be attained. Doubtless, happiness is the desire of every individual, both of the natural, and spiritual man; but, unhappily for himself, the natural man, instead of "lifting up," or exalting the Divine Redeemer "from the earth," and being thus "drawn unto him;" is daily sinking him lower, and lower in his impure love, and spirit, and thus separating himself farther from him. To "lift up" Jesus, the Divine Redeemer "from the earth" signifies and implies an exalting the heavenly principle of love and truth from the Lord in our hearts, and understandings; instead of suffering our affections to be rooted in, and fixed upon, the carnal delights of this world, and the flesh; instead of depending upon the things of time and sense; to raise our affections to divine objects; to rely upon the Lord alone for every blessing; from lovers of this world to become lovers of the Lord; from being unjust to become just; from revengeful to become charitable; from being passionate to become patient; from being proud to become humble; from being wise in natural things, to become wise in the things of God; and from being only nominal christians, and professing believers in Jesus, to become true disciples, and sincere practisers of pure, genuine, and vital godliness, and piety. To act thus, is to "lift up" Jesus "from the earth;" to live thus, is to live in heaven here below; and to be in this state is to be in Christ, and Christ in us;" for then, and then only, will he "draw us unto him."

The

The promise of being "drawn" unto Jesus, beloved, it will be well to observe, is only conditional; it is only in consequence of his being "lifted up." If we consider the words of my text in a natural point of view; if we consider that it only related to his being crucified, without having any spiritual meaning, it undeniably proves, that as Jesus has been thus "lifted up," he will "draw all men unto him." Many pious, and well-meaning christians have been led into this error. God forbid! that I should tax their charity, or call their sincerity in question! If this be the real principle of their hearts; it will, at least, administer comfort to themselves; and, if their practice be agreeable to their principles, every blessing will attend them. I cannot however view the text in this literal point of view; neither can I find any passage in scripture to favour this interpretation.

We have many instances of Our Lord annexing a positive duty to a reward proposed; as in the following; when Our Lord answered the young man's question, he said, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," making his entering into life only conditionally, if "he kept the commandments;" again he saith to the parent, whose son was possessed with a spirit, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him, that believeth," making his faith the only foundation of a cure; again he said unto his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me," making mortification and self-denial the terms and only conditions, on which they could become his disciples; and again, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." This drawing,

drawing, therefore, can never be effected till the will of man is entirely given up to the will of the Lord. It is the nature of opposite qualities to repel, and to separate, not to attract, and unite. Whilst man, then, is in evil, and error, he cannot be drawn unto the Lord, because the Lord is Goodness itself, and Truth itself; and as goodness cannot be united with evil, and truth with error, so conjunction can never be effected, till man has elevated the Redeeming goodness and truth of the Lord in his own heart and understanding. Salvation is thus possible to every soul; inasmuch as every soul is supplied with the means of effecting this redemption, and a divine power of lifting up his Redeemer. Sincerely to be pitied is that narrow heart, which cannot admit these extensive truths, but would confine the mercies of Jesus to a partial redemption! None need, however, to be discouraged, inasmuch as the invitation is to all, and the promise to all, if they will but "lift him up." With respect to our worldly concerns, we are sufficiently attentive to what appears to be our greatest interest; with respect to the cultivation of our natural understandings, we spare no pains, no labour, no expence, no cost. An enlightened understanding, and an enlarged heart are acquisitions, which we eagerly pant after, and are studious to acquire; and surely we can never think ourselves justifiable in procuring the one, whilst we neglect the other. Natural knowledge is often productive of much evil; it is apt to draw man into a belief of his own wisdom; but spiritual knowledge, if it be genuine, will bring him to a confession of his own ignorance, and an acknowledgment of his own weakness. Let not man, however, depend upon his own fancied strength, and abilities; but let him confess,

that

that the All of Goodness, and the All of Truth cometh from the Lord ; but that his co-operation is required to make this goodness and truth useful, and serviceable unto him.

To conclude. We are all of us, I trust, beloved, convinced from what has been said, how necessary it is for us to " lift up " Jesus, or which is the same thing, to " lift up " his redeeming love and truth in our wills and understandings, before we can be drawn unto him. To the same purpose is the language of Our Lord to St. John, in the Revelations, where it is written, " Behold ! I stand at the door, and knock ! if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Here we see the freedom of man in its greatest extent ; and whilst we are thankful for the liberty of the creature, cannot but adore the bounty, and love of the Redeemer. If we each of us appeal to our own hearts, they will tell us, we may be happy, if we will ; and that nothing but a depraved will, and a dark understanding keep us from beholding, and enjoying the benefits of Redeeming Love, and Truth.

Let us, then, seriously apply ourselves to search, and examine our own misery, wretchedness, ignorance, and sin. Let us thus endeavour to reason with ourselves :---If to be happy is to be good, and to be good is to be happy, how far am I from being good, and consequently from being happy ! Have I ever seriously considered, how ignorant I indeed am, with respect to the things of another kingdom ? Have I ever applied my heart unto wisdom ? Have I ever " lifted up " my Redeemer ? Have I ever found my heart

heart filled with divine love? Do all my affections center in an entire obedience to his commandments? If not, how miserable is my state! how deplorable my condition! inasmuch as I have only so far "lifted up" my Redeemer, as I have exalted in my own heart the spirit of heavenly love and charity towards God and towards my neighbour, and practised the divine virtues of humility under affliction, patience in adversity, and resignation to the dispensations of providence under every appearance. If you cannot answer for yourselves with comfort, remember the fault is your own. Omnipotence has done all, that love and mercy can do, consistent with your freedom, to make you happy. Raise, therefore, your affections from earth to heaven; thus will you be daily "lifting up" the redeeming power of the Lord in your own hearts, and lives; he will draw you into a nearer state of conjunction with him; till you are enlightened with the fullness of his truth, blessed with the largeness of his love; and his whole Spirit, life and nature become the spirit, life, and nature of your hearts.

And O Holy, and Merciful Jesus! in this great, and important work, let us look unto Thee alone for protection against all our enemies; let thy power be manifested in our weakness; that walking in the fullness of thy strength, and supported by thy love, we may be enabled so to "lift thee up from the earth," that we may be for ever drawn, and drawing nearer to Thee to all Eternity.

SERMON V.

St. JOHN, Chap. v. Ver. 35.

"HE WAS A BURNING, AND A SHINING LIGHT; AND YE WERE WILLING, FOR A SEASON, TO REJOICE IN HIS LIGHT."

IN the preceding part of this chapter, Our Blessed Lord, whose every labor was that of love, tenderness, mercy, and benevolence to the souls, and bodies of his creatures, we are told, had "healed the impotent man, who had an infirmity, thirty and eight years." But even this office of unutterable goodness could not pass without the bitter invectives, and revengeful malice of the Jews; "who persecuted him, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day." Such is ever the reward, and return of goodness, affection, mercy, and love, from those, whose hearts, and spirits, and natures are opposite, and contrary to, that heavenly system of charity, which lives only in doing good to others, in removing their pains, in relieving their distresses, in comforting the broken-hearted, in healing the sick, in pouring the balm of peace into the heart, wrung with sorrow, anguish, and despair, and feeling all the fullness of those endearing words, where it is written, "It is more blessed to give, than
to

to receive." Their principal reason, or pretended excuse, for this bitter persecution, was, because he had "healed a man on the sabbath-day." Pitiful subterfuge! yet such, however weak, as an evil heart, and a revengeful spirit, will ever have recourse to, to screen, if possible, the malignity of its venom, and give its most detestable actions the colour, and appearance of zeal for uprightness, and integrity, for religion, and the pure service, and worship of God. They had seen the amazing miracle, wrought by love divine—they heard him declaring his power to perform this proceeded from his Heavenly Father, that is from Love itself, which is the Father, or Parent, or Fountain of every good, and truth; and that, if they wanted further proof, he referred them to the testimony of John, whom all the people considered as a Prophet; for John had said, when he beheld Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!" He tells them, however, that the works themselves were a greater witness, than that of John, "for John wrought no miracle;" but at the same time declares in the words of my text, that "He, was a burning, and a shining light," and that "they were willing, for a season, to rejoice in his light."

It is much to be feared, that many amongst us, like the Jews of old, are ignorant of the nature, and meaning of these blessed words, owing to their blindness, and ignorance of the things of God, and his eternal kingdom. Let me, therefore, beg your most serious attention, whilst I endeavour to point out to you,

First, What is signified by "Light."

Secondly, What is signified by a "Burning Light."

Thirdly, What is meant by a "Shining Light."

Fourthly, What by being "willing, for a season, to rejoice in the Light." And

Lastly, Apply the subject to ourselves.

First, then, what is signified by "Light."

The light of this world, we all know, is that outward manifested property of the Divine Being, which is intended for, and calculated, and adapted to the help, and assistance of man in this outward and natural world. It is by means of light, that he is enabled to discern, and discover the form, and beauty, and order of every thing around him; and it is by means of light, that he is enabled to do, to execute, to perform, and finish whatever his hand findeth to do, inasmuch as without light he would be unable to take a step, much less to fulfil any office, or duty of life. Where light, therefore, is, there is a possibility of discharging every thing, as we ought, in an orderly, regular, and complete manner. Natural light must consequently be natural order, inasmuch as by it we may see to guide, and govern ourselves aright: whereas natural darkness, which is opposite to this light, is productive of disorder, and confusion; because nothing can be seen, discovered, performed, or executed therein aright.

From this natural explanation of the nature, usefulness, and absolute necessity of natural light, in order to perform any thing aright, we may probably
be

be led to see more clearly, and comprehend more fully the nature, usefulness, and necessity of spiritual light.

Spiritual light, be it well observed, beloved, whereby we are enabled to see aright, is the Divine Truth of the Lord, or his ever-blessed, and holy Word. What a never-erring glass, or mirror is here held up to our view ! What deplorable prospects on the one hand, and what enlivening views on the other does it not discover ? What ignorance, heretofore unknown ! What delusions, heretofore considered as realities ! What sins unrepented of ! What impieties practised ! On the other hand, what endearing promises ! What proffered mercies ! What divine helps does it not shew forth ! So that it may justly be called Light. Our Lord himself, in order to shew us its blessedness, declares himself to be "light," when he says, "I am the light of the world."

Having now endeavoured to shew, what is meant and signified by "light," let us proceed to consider,

Secondly, What is signified by a "Burning Light."

Our Blessed Lord, when speaking of John, does not say, "he was a light," but "a burning light." Doubtless this distinction was not merely a form of expression, but necessary fully to point out the true nature of that "light," which would be available to salvation.

"Burning,"

"Burning," whereby heat and warmth are signified, is always essential to the production, as well as preservation of the natural, and outward life. Nothing throughout the creation, whether animal, plant, vegetable, or man can live without it. It is the very life and soul of every thing, that hath being, or more properly speaking, is the life itself. The true use and meaning of a "burning light," we shall better comprehend from the following example.

Light, without "burning," or warmth, or heat is like the sun in winter, which, though we behold its shining, affords us no heat or warmth, in consequence whereof no births of nature are produced; the grass withers, the leaves fall, no fruit is perceived, but all is as a blank in the order of creation. A "burning light," however, is like the sun in spring, when its warming beams, and cheering heat reanimate all around, giving beauty, form, smell, taste, and life itself to every production. Just so it is with respect to spiritual light; when this spiritual light, or this Divine Truth, or Word of the Lord is simple light, having and containing in itself no "burning," no heat, or warmth, that is no pure, heavenly love, it is then like the sun in winter, unfruitful, enlightening, but not vivifying, discovering, but not cherishing, and causing the blessed kingdom of heaven to be formed in our hearts, that is, the kingdom of pure love, holy affections, heavenly desires, mercy, compassion, charity, and such like divine properties, qualities, and perfections. When this spiritual light, however, that is, the divine truth of the Lord, is filled with heat, and "burning," when it is brought into action by the pure love of the Lord, and his eternal kingdom, it is then a "burning light;" it is then

then Divine Truth, manifested, fed, nourished, strengthened, refreshed, and blessed by love, which is the very life and soul of piety.

When Our Lord, therefore, said, that John was a "burning" light, he signified, that he was in a state of heavenly truth, and wisdom, coupled with, and filled by, heavenly goodness, and love; or, in other words, that he knew the full extent of the divine truth, or word of the Lord; and lived in the strict observance, and faithful discharge of that blessed truth, and word, from a love of its amiable nature, purity, and capacity to make us happy. Light itself, or heat itself, that is truth itself, or love itself, cannot be useful—it must be light and heat, love and truth united and conjoined together, for Our Lord says, "He was," not only a "burning," but also a "shining light;" which leads me to consider,

Thirdly, What is meant by a "Shining Light."

Light, we have before observed, signifies naturally a state, wherein we are enabled to behold the objects around us, and what we have done, as well as what we have to do: spiritually it signifies to be in a state of intelligence, or wisdom from the Lord, or the knowing and understanding his blessed will. A "shining light," however, signifies a state of pure truth, unmixed with error, unclouded by ignorance, a truth, or wisdom, heightened, purified, and refined in its proceeding from, and conjunction with the fountain of all love, mercy, and goodness. A "burning light," therefore, is a state of love and truth; and a "shining light" is the most exalted,
and

and pure state of truth, as proceeding from, and actuated by the spirit of heavenly love.

Let us now proceed to consider, Fourthly, what is meant by being "willing, for a season, to rejoice in the light."

Deplorable, indeed, is the condition of those, who are without light, but more deplorable, if possible, are those, who are "willing, only for a season, to continue in the light!"---To be in the light, is to be in a state of truth, or in the knowledge, and profession of that doctrine, which is agreeable to the truth, or holy word of the Lord; according to those words of the Lord, where he says, "Walk in the light, that ye may be the children of the light;" where light signifies truth of doctrine, and children of the light, those, who are guided, influenced, governed, and directed according to the spirit, temper, and disposition of that truth.

When John first began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" many admired, followed, and espoused his doctrine. The uncommon austerity of his life, corresponding to his severe injunctions and preaching, gained many proselytes from the Jews. They were "willing," however, "only for a season," only for a time, to rejoice in that "light." They knew the truth; they were pleased, and admired it, but they did not love it so as to practise it. Like many of our modern Pharisees, they would go to what they call a gospel-sermon; they would enter into the nature of the subject, point out its beauties, shew its connection, repeat.

repeat every passage, and quotation of scripture with so much earnestness, that one would imagine them to be "altogether" christians. But, alas! no sooner was the sound gone out of their ears, but they "returned like the dog to his vomit, and like the sow to her wallowing in the mire." They were in the light, but not in the burning light, in the knowledge, and understanding of truth, but not in the love and practice of it; and therefore, Our Lord says in another place, "If ye had not seen," that is, had not known the truth, "ye had had no sin, but now ye say, we see, therefore your sin remaineth."

To conclude. Often have I inculcated, beloved, the indispensable obligation of this heavenly marriage of love and truth, or this "burning and shining light," before any spiritual children, or offspring can be produced; that is, before any spiritual, and holy desires, any pure, and heavenly affections, any fervent charity and love, any divine wisdom, any intelligence and knowledge of the Lord, and his kingdom can be born; all which are begotten by, proceed from, and are born of, this love and truth as their spiritual parents. The mind of man is formed of two principles, called will and understanding, which are the proper recipients of this "burning and shining light," this love and truth, love being the food of the will, and truth that of the understanding; but when operating according to divine order, and harmony, they constitute ONE, each necessary to the support of the other, and each depending upon the other. When this order and harmony, however, are disturbed, when the will is carried one way, and the understanding another, the blessed union is dissolved, and man becomes not a "burning and a
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shining light," but "rejoiceth, only for a season in the light." This, it is to be feared, is the case with many of us! Should a person ask us, whether we understand, and know our duty, I doubt not but we should consider it as an insult offered to our understanding, and make no very christian a reply. But should he ask us, whether we do our duty, whether we fulfil the obligations we have laid ourselves under, whether we practise what we know, what could we say then?----It is probable we should either return no answer at all, or at least one by no means to our credit or comfort. Tell me not what you know, what you comprehend, what you believe, or what you profess---but tell me what you practise---how you live---what evils you shun as sins against the Lord---what holy duties you perform as grateful acknowledgments for favors past, for blessings innumerable, for providence unceasing, and for love unutterable, and unbounded. Tell me not how many prayers you have muttered---how many good books you have read--how many churches you have attended---how many sermons you have heard---but tell, ah! tell me rather, what fruit you have brought forth---what thoughts you have of death---what preparations you have made for eternity---how matters stand between you and God. Does your light burn? Is your faith, or truth, coupled with love? Or does your soul appear dull, gloomy, and barren of every spiritual excellence, gloomy as the evening shades, and barren as the flinty rock? You need no length of time to consider---ask your own hearts---they will soon answer, they will soon acquit, or condemn you, "as your actions have been, either good or evil." No happiness without God---no comfort without religion---no religion without truth

truth and love ! Mens' understandings may be elevated beyond belief, whilst their lives and actions are low, mean, groveling, earthly, and sensual. But this will be of no avail. The love and truth, the will and the understanding should ever be joined together. Man should not delude himself with saying,----" My understanding informeth me of, and directeth me to, better things, better objects, and better pursuits ;" but he should labour to say,----My will hungereth after more lasting comforts than those of earth---my heart loveth more substantial good---my affections are fixed upon sure realities---and I not only know, but I also practise, and do the things, which my Redeemer, and my Lord desireth.

May we all of us be careful, beloved, not to deceive ourselves with those pharisaical, and unscriptural doctrines, which are so much advanced amongst us, that faith alone will be sufficient for us, that the bare act of believing will procure us the remission and removal of our sins---Let us not, I say, suffer ourselves to be drawn aside, and enticed by them ; for let us remember, " The devils believe, and tremble," but are no happier thereby ; let us remember, that Our Lord saith, " If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them ;" where happiness only is offered in consequence of acting according to his will, for action proceedeth from the love, and love from the will, and consequently the will is the source of all order, harmony, purity, and love, or of all disorder, confusion, impurity, and aversion. It is further written, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart ;" and again, " If ye love me, keep my commandments ;" and again, " Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things, that I say ;"

say ;" whence it must appear undeniably convincing to every one, who doth not shut his eyes against the truth ; that love, not faith alone, is the standard, whereby we may judge of our advancement in the divine life ; and that love and faith are essentially necessary to our well-being in eternity, if we wish to experience the divine favor, or, in the language of the Royal Psalmist, are desirous to find, to our comfort, the Lord to be a God, a Redeemer and Saviour, "plenteous in goodness and truth." May our faith, then, ever be coupled with love, our truth with goodness, our profession with our practice ; that we may not be, to our endless confusion, like those Jews of old, who "were willing, only for a season, to remain in the light ;" but, to our eternal blessedness, and comfort, like John of old, "burning, and shining lights," abundant in the knowledge, but more so in the practice of the things of God ; grounded in the faith, but more so in the love, of the Great God and Redeemer, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; filled with a reverential awe of, but more so with expressive gratitude to, the bounteous benefactor, and liberal bestower of every good ; humbled in our own eyes, but elevated in the sight of the Lord ; depressed with the sense of our own unworthiness, but cheered with the inward sensibility, and blessed experience of the divine mercy ; in a word, thinking nothing, but what is true, loving nothing, but what is of God ; and filled with all the fullness of that unbounded charity, and love, which "suffereth long, and is kind ; which envieth not ; vaunteth not itself ; is not puffed up ; doth not behave itself unseemly ; seeketh not its own ; is not easily provoked ; thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth

beareth all things ; believeth all things ; hopeth all things ; endureth all things ;" and which, when prophecies, and tongues shall cease, and when knowledge itself shall vanish away, shall abide and remain for ever, pure, as the blessed fountain, from which it springs ; diffusive as that bounteous God, and Father, who is love itself, love ineffable, and utterable, and whose tender mercies and compassions fail not. Acting under the influence of this blessed spirit and temper, we shall be for ever happy ; separated from it, we shall be miserable, unholy, and unhappy. May the Lord, therefore, enable us to make a prudent, and suitable choice ; guide us by his spirit, fill us with his wisdom, influence us by his love ; that we may not only know his truth, but always practise, what we know in love, and thus experience, to our everlasting comfort, the full meaning of those blessed words, where it is written, " If any man love me, my Father will love him ; and we will come unto him, and into him, and make our abode with him !"---Amen.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

St. MATTHEW, Chap. ii. Part of Ver. 2.

"WE HAVE SEEN HIS STAR IN THE EAST, AND ARE COME
TO WORSHIP HIM."

THE Holy Scriptures, or Blessed Word of the Lord have ever been acknowledged to contain the most useful, and interesting truths to the minds of those, who were willing, and desirous to view, and consider, and understand them aright. To the natural man, or the natural mind of man, when separate from the spiritual, the divine word appears, and is only science, influencing the understanding, but having no form in the will; founded in opinion, but not in the pure spirit of an holy love, and heaven-born charity; and thus becomes the means of introducing disorder and confusion into every part of the rational, and intellectual mind. When, the natural man, however, or the natural mind of man is united, and made one with the spiritual; when it descends into the heart, and will, producing thereby in the life a constant obedience to the divine precepts, it then becomes intelligence, or wisdom; entering with all its fulness into the rational mind; beholding all the bounties of the divine mercy and goodness through the

the sphere of a christian charity, and love; and operating in all the perfection of blessedness, according to those words of the Lord, where it is written, " My Father worketh hitherto; and I work;" and again, " As the Father hath life in himself, so also hath he given to the son to have life in himself, for, without me, ye can do nothing;" whereby is signified the power of a divine wisdom, and truth, manifested through the mild, yet chearing, and enlivening rays of divine love, and goodness.

Such seems to have been the state of the " wise men" of old, mentioned in my text, when they declared at Jerusalem, " We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

There is much heavenly information and instruction, in these words; inasmuch as they contain the sum, and substance of every thing, which respects, and is calculated to secure, the everlasting interest, and blessedness of man. Let me, therefore, bespeak your most serious attention, whilst I endeavour to shew you,

First, What is meant by " Star ;

Secondly, What is meant by " his Star;"

Thirdly, What is signified by the " East," " We have seen his star in the east;" And

Lastly, What " by coming to worship him;" " We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

First, then, let us endeavour to shew, what is meant by " star."

A " star"

A "star" we know is one of those heavenly bodies, which convey, and communicate light to men. It is not, however, adapted, or calculated to give light by day, inasmuch as its clearest, and greatest brightness could not then be discovered; but emits its sparkling rays in the dusky dimness, or obscure shades of the darksome night. The stars, therefore, are peculiarly useful in guiding the bewildered traveller on his journey; when, without them, he would be exposed to numberless impediments, and precipices, and dangers, which surround him on every side. Such is the usefulness of those nightly shining bodies, which give light to the eyes, and safety and security to the whole man, as to his outward and bodily life; but cannot reach or influence his inward and spiritual life. All outward things, I have often told you, are but the visible manifestations, or correspondences, of some invisible, and internal principle, property, or quality, in the soul, or spirit of man; each of which is beautifully descriptive of its own usefulness, nature, quality, and property in the spiritual man, or the spiritual principle of life in man.

By "star," in its spiritual correspondence, or so far as it has relation to the soul, or spirit of man, is ever signified intelligence, grounded in the rational principle, from which true wisdom is derived, and produced. To see a "star," therefore, must signify to be in a state of intelligence, or understanding, respecting the things of the Lord, and his eternal kingdom.

We have before observed, that a "star" is not calculated to give light by "day," which signifies a
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state of truth and love, but by "night," which is a state of no truth, and no love. Here we may further behold the adorable wisdom and goodness of the Lord, who hath thus given us these blessed helps and informations in our journey to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Dark we all of us are in our natural state, as to heavenly, and divine truths and understanding. Well, therefore, doth this correspondence point out to us the goodness of the Lord, who hath adapted the brightness of his shining to the darkness of our night; not destroying our sight by the broad blaze of day; but sweetly attempering it to the weakness of our vision, and the nature of our frame. But let us now consider,

Secondly, What is meant by "his star."

The full meaning and efficacy of these words will soon be discovered, if we but remember the person, whom they came to seek, and to worship; and that person was, "he, that was born King of the Jews;" "Where is he, that is born King of the Jews?" for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." There were other stars besides "his;" but "his" only they were solicitous to see. There were other things, other objects, with which they might exercise their understanding; but the knowledge of the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ was the only desire of their heart. "We have seen his star," therefore, signifies the opening of the rational principle to understand the things of the Lord, and his eternal kingdom; inasmuch as nothing can be truly called "his," which is not guid-

ed by him, which is not influenced by his spirit, directed by his wisdom, and which does not partake of his own life, and nature. Other things are, indeed, his, as being created, and formed by him, and "in whom they live, and move, and have their being;" but not "his," as being separated from him by an impure, and unholy love, a false faith, and disobedience to his commandments. But let us now consider,

Thirdly, What is meant by the "East;" "We have seen his star in the east."

In the "East," we know the first dawn of day appeareth; inasmuch as the sun ariseth thence, imparting, as he proceedeth on his course, light and heat, life, nourishment, and support to every thing around. It ariseth, however, from no other quarter, but always from the same source. The Lord, therefore, who is the sun of the spiritual world, and imparteth his blessed heat and light to those, who are under his influence, is said to come from the "East," and is also called "the bright, and morning star;" and again, "the day-spring from on high;" all which passages have the same meaning, and signification; and imply a blessed state of heavenly illumination, and truth from the Lord God the Saviour Jesus Christ. In the regeneration, the rational mind first beholds "a star in the east," that is, is guided by intelligence from the Lord, derived from the blessed word of truth; and, in consequence of that intelligence, is brought to Jerusalem to worship him; that is, is brought into the full manifestation of the divine wisdom, and truth, which are signified by Jerusalem.

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Let us now proceed to shew, Lastly, What is meant by "coming to worship him;" "We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

The "wise men," as they are called, "came from the east to Jerusalem" to seek the Lord Jesus Christ, and "to worship him." They left their own country, under the guidance of this "star," this intelligence, and came to Jerusalem. But why did they leave their own country, or kingdom? Because in their own country, or their own kingdom no Redeemer was to be born. They came from the east; and we have just now said, that by East was signified the Lord, or his divine truth. Why, then, did they leave the east, and consequently, the Lord? Let us not be rash in judging, before we have weighed the matter with seriousness, and attention. By East, when applied to the spiritual life of man, is ever signified the Lord, or what belongs to his eternal kingdom, as spiritual illumination, divine truth, eternal wisdom, mercy, goodness, love, charity, and the like, all which proceed from the Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ, as their sun and life; according to what is written by the Prophet, where he says, "To those, that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing under his wings." By East, however, when applied to the natural life of man, or his carnal state, is signified his propriety, or self-love, and whatever ariseth, and is produced therefrom, as self-derived intelligence, false reasoning, earthly wisdom, unmercifulness, evil, hatred, uncharitableness, and the like, all which proceed from man's propriety, or self-love, according to those words of the Lord himself, where he saith, "Out of the heart of
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man," that is from self-love, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies;" all which defile a man, and separate him from the kingdom, and power, and love of the Great God and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, and his eternal law of charity, truth, and love.

When the wise men, therefore, came from the east, they came out of the dominion, and rule of their own wisdom, out of the government of their own carnal intelligence, and understanding unto Jerusalem; following the course, and guidance of the star, which appeared unto them in the East of Heaven; even the refreshing influences, and divine impulses of that "wisdom, which cometh from above; and is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy." But, why did they come to Jerusalem? Why did they not go to some other place? Could they have received information from no other place?—A satisfactory answer will soon be given to these enquiries, if we enquire faithfully, what is meant by Jerusalem.

Scripture names are always significative of, or correspond with, some principle in man; or represent some doctrine, or truth of the church of the Lord—Thus by Sodom, and Gomorrha is ever signified, whatever is most sensual, and infernal. By Judah, whatever hath relation to charity, and love, as where it is written in the Psalms, "Judah is my Law-giver;" and again it is said "the Lord should come out of Judah," for thus it is written by the Prophet; "And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the Princes of Judah; for out
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of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel." And again, by Jerusalem, whatever hath relation to faith or truth, whence it is written, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! which killed the prophets, and stonest them, that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" where it is spoken of an opposition to the reception, and admission of divine truth from the Lord; and consequently a falsification of the whole word. The Temple at Jerusalem was representative of the Lord, for he himself saith, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it in three days," "speaking of the temple of his body;" but the Jews understood that he spake of the holy temple at Jerusalem.

When the wise men, therefore, came unto Jerusalem, they came into the enjoyment of the divine truth, through a steady following of the star, that is, through an attention to that intelligence, which appeared, and was manifested to their understandings from heaven. Not content, however, with knowing, where he was to be born, they hastened to pay their obeisance to this Infant Redeemer---they went to Bethlehem of Judah---they went on from Jerusalem to Judah---from truth to love; and manifested that truth, and that love, by falling down at his feet, and worshipping him; by opening their treasures, and presenting unto him gifts, gold, frank-incense, and myrrh; manifesting their goodness, and truth, their love and faith, their illumination, and regeneration, by acts of obedience, and reverence, of gratitude, and esteem.

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To conclude. Darkness, ignorance, and error is the natural state of every soul, unenlightened by the divine truth of the Lord. No star appears to guide his wayward steps---No resources in his own nature---that is overclouded, gloomy, and diseased; filled with evil, infirmity, and sickness; from which he cannot escape, and from which he cannot be delivered; till he looks towards the East, that is, towards the Lord, and beholds his star, that is, intelligence and understanding, beaming forth upon his mental eye, and vision, and displaying all the brightness of his glory to his astonished soul. But, perhaps, it may be said, there is now no vision, no star in the east, to which we can look, and which can bring us to Jerusalem, and from thence to Bethlehem of Judah!---God forbid! beloved, that we should say so---for where there is no vision, there is no spiritual light, and truth---where there is no star, there is no intelligence, or understanding---if we go not up to Jerusalem to worship, we can never know the will of the Lord---if we go not thence to Bethlehem of Judah, we can never behold the Redeemer and Saviour, Jehovah Jesus---and consequently can never enter into his kingdom of light, and love, of harmony, and peace.

May we all of us, in good earnest, enquire, whether we have yet seen his star; whether we have left our own country, the land of earthly-mindedness, the land of carnal delights and pleasures; whether we have followed his star, that is, the influences of his eternal power and love; whether we have gone up to Jerusalem; whether we have entered into his truth; and lastly, whether we have gone to Bethlehem of Judah to manifest our truth by love; and offer the fruits

fruits of an holy obedience ; for till all this process is fulfilled ; till we have forsaken our own country ; till we have followed the direction, and guidance of the Lord, and offered him gold, frank-incense, and myrrh ; we are still ignorant of our duty, unacquainted with ourselves, unacquainted with our God, and strangers to the operation of the divine mercy and goodness upon us. Let us, then, banish from our minds all propriety, and self-love ; all human wisdom, which is contrary to divine wisdom ; that being filled only with the spirit of an holy, pure and heavenly love ; and guided only by an heavenly, and divine wisdom ; we may be enabled to say, with the wise men of old, “ We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.”

SERMON

SERMON VII.

St. JOHN, Chap. v. Ver. 24.

"VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, HE, THAT HEARETH MY WORD, AND BELIEVETH ON HIM, THAT SENT ME, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION; BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE."

OF all the various disputes, which have from time to time engaged the attention, and abilities of mankind, none appears to have been more prevalent, than that of a Religious nature. Men have persecuted each other, for the sake of meer ideas, and idle conjecture; they have opposed sentiment to sentiment, form to form, and principle to principle; when, at the same time, the least degree of true religion would have shewn them, that sentiments, and forms, and principles, are only so far connected with religion, as they have their foundation in charity, and are grounded in the Eternal Love, and Truth of the Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Such seems to have been the conduct of the Jews of old to our Lord himself; whom they even attempted to kill for his work of charity, and labour of love. Such conduct, however, only drew from
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his lips the instructive lessons of truth, and love; whereby he laboured to bring them to an acquaintance with their own fallen state, and nature; and gave them unerring rules for securing their eternal blessedness, in the words of my text, where he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he, that heareth my word, and believeth on him, that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life:"

These words were spoken by our Lord to us, beloved, as well as to the Jews of old; inasmuch as we, it is much to be feared, are immersed in evils of life, and falses of doctrine, as much as they were; and, therefore, stand in need of the same direction, and assistance. Let us, therefore, consider, from the words of my text, what is meant,

First, by "the Word;"

Secondly, What by "hearing the Word;"

Thirdly, Endeavour to shew, how a proper "hearing of this Word" produceth a firm belief, and trust, in the divine love and mercy of the Lord, which is signified by him "that sent me."

Fourthly, Point out, in what sense the true believer is said to have Everlasting Life, and not to "come into condemnation; but to have passed from death unto life."---And may the Lord, in mercy, incline all our hearts to listen with serious attention, that we may be enlightened by his truth, comforted by his promises, encouraged by his mercy, and finally saved by, and made happy in, his love!

First, then, let us consider, what is meant by the Word.

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It has been, and still is, unhappily, supposed by some, that the Word, here spoken of, is only the outward letter, or writing of scripture. To the natural man, indeed, it can only appear a natural writing, an outward letter, and an external word; because his understanding being according to the wisdom of this world only, and his will influenced by a carnal, earthly, and selfish love alone, the "things of God are foolishness unto him," and his natural capacity cannot receive them, "because they are spiritually discerned." The Word, however, is of a far more heavenly, and divine origin; inasmuch as it is, in its highest sense, the manifestation, or outward evidence of the Lord himself, who dwells, and is, spiritually, in the Word, in all his fulness; unveiling his truth to every creature, according to its capacity, and desire of receiving that truth. It is according to this sublime, and heavenly description of the Word, that St. John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word, and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." It was likewise in the same sense, that Our Lord himself says, "My Words, they are spirit, and they are life;" and in another place calls himself, "the Way, the Truth," that is the Word, "and the Life."

The outward word, or letter, therefore, is as a body, or covering for the inward, and spiritual sense contained therein; and therefore, whilst man continues in his carnal, unregenerate state, he sees it, and reads it only as a natural book, without discerning the spirituality, and inward meaning of it.

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Let us now, Secondly, consider what is signified by "hearing the Word."

To "hear the word," is also but too generally understood, to signify the hearing the outward word read with the natural, and outward ears. Men have, in general, been long unaccustomed to hear the Lord, speaking spiritually, in his Word, or the outward manifestation, or ultimate, of himself to their hearts; but be assured, beloved, that there is no hearing, which will be profitable to salvation, but such as is inward, spiritual, and divine. An outward hearing may satisfy an outward hearer; but can never satisfy the ardent longings of an immortal spirit. The man, who builds all his happiness on the strength of human reason; who can see no further, than the short compass of a narrow, and worldly morality, may please himself with the amusing appearance of imaginary comforts, but can never hear one single sentence of spiritual consolation, and peace. The worldly hearer of every description has no idea, or view of truth, or faith, "as it is in Jesus;" he seeks no further instruction, than such as can please, and amuse, without ever calling to mind, that without truth, there can be no light; without light there can be no knowledge; without knowledge there can be no conjunction with the Lord; and without conjunction there can be no happiness, and consequently no salvation. Such are the effects of an outward hearing of the word, when the spiritual man may truly be called deaf, and stands in need of the divine touch of the Lord to unstop his spiritual ears, to cure his spiritual deafness, and open his ears to the melodious sound of the

blessed gospel of peace and love. Which brings me to consider,

Thirdly, how a proper hearing of this word produceth a firm belief, and trust, in the divine love and mercy of the Lord, which is signified by "him that sent me."

Deaf, and dumb, and halt, and blind we all of us are, beloved, in our natural state, till enlightened by the Word, and refreshed by its loving admonitions, and tender expostulations. When man, however, seriously begins to look into himself; when he for a moment views himself as he is; he sees nothing but weakness, nothing but ignorance, nothing but misery, condemnation, and death. From this deplorable state, he is well aware, nature can never release him; something of a superior power must assist him, and this he is sensible can come only from the Lord. Where then must he look, or apply, but to the word of the Lord, which can furnish instruction, consolation, satisfaction and joy to every one, according to the nature of his situation, condition, and state. To the word of the Lord he immediately betakes himself; he hears his own misery described; but, blessed tidings! The same word points out his deliverance, and the means, whereby such deliverance may be effected. To the direction of that word, therefore, he betakes himself; and as he reads, or hears it read, he finds his burthen gradually decreasing; the gloomy prospect he lately beheld before him wears a brighter aspect; instead of despondence, he beholds hope extending her benign power; instead of darkness,

darkness, he beholds light, light unutterable, beaming forth upon the benighted senses; the deaf ear is opened to the harmony of love; and the Lord himself is revealed to his enraptured heart. But, beloved, this does not appear in consequence of his barely reading, or hearing the outward word, but by his looking upon that word, as the medium, whereby the Lord communicates himself to man; and in which, in all his fulness, the Lord dwells, and manifests himself to the believing heart. When man thus approaches the Lord, through his word, from an earnest desire of partaking of his fulness, truth, and love; he gives up all into the care, and guidance of the divine love, and mercy; being well assured, that whoever committeth his cause to the Lord, and trusteth in "the rock of ages," shall never be disappointed, or want success.

Having now endeavoured to shew, that a proper hearing of this word produceth a firm belief, and trust in the divine love and mercy of the Lord; proceed we lastly to point out, in what sense the true Believer is said to have "everlasting life, and not to come into condemnation, but to have passed from death unto life."

Before man begins to hear the word of the Lord in a spiritual, saving manner, he is ignorant of his own state and condition; he is carnal, sensual, poor, weak, unstable, and earthly minded. His affections, having their ground, and foundation, in the things of this world, and the flesh only, must of consequence partake of a worldly and fleshly nature only. The love of dominion, the love of himself, and the love of the world, are opposed to, and are in perpetual

tual conflict, and disagreement with, the spirit of humility, the love of the Lord, the love of his neighbour, and the love of usefulness, charity, and truth. His heart is the habitation of impure spirits, and devils, who influence all his evil affections; his tongue is envenomed with "the poison of Asps," with the fables, and abominations of the powers of darkness; his nature is, like the serpent, closely bound to earth, and its enjoyments; his understanding is polluted, and defiled with worldly wisdom, which is contrary to "that wisdom, that cometh from above;" his soul is spiritually disordered, diseased, and sick; weighed down with the burden of its disorders, and maldy; and afflicted with misery, pain, sorrow, and woe. Such a state as this may be justly called a state of condemnation, and a state of death; a death of every thing that is pure, heavenly, and divine; a death of all acquaintance with the power, and spirit of true religion; a death of all heavenly intelligence, wisdom, and truth; a death of all heaven-born charity, goodness, and love; a death of all "that mind, which was in Christ Jesus;" and a death of all spiritual comforts and eternal life. The life, which such a one lives, is frequently called in scripture, "Death;" it is sometimes called "The Old Man, The Son of Perdition, The Prince of the Power of the Air;" it is further represented as a life, which abounds in all the fullness of unsatisfying pleasures, which are the parents of misery, condemnation, and death. From such a life, or rather, from such a death, as this, nothing can deliver him, but the eternal truth of the Lord; unveiling himself, in his word, to his understanding; gradually, and as he is able to bear it, discovering to him, that "He is the way, the truth, and the life;" removing his doubts;

doubts ; dissipating his fears ; encouraging his hope ; strengthening his faith ; establishing his confidence ; sealing his assurance ; and purifying his love, till he becomes a partaker of the divine life of the Lord, which alone is life, life eternal, a life, which is nothing but truth, and goodness, order, and harmony, beauty, and wisdom, perfection, and love.

Such is the death, from which man is raised by a proper hearing of the word ; and such is the life, which he enjoys, by virtue of his resurrection from the grave of sin, to the brightness, and warmth of divine truth, and love. Happy deliverance this ! when he is no longer a servant of the world, but a child of God ; when he no longer feels the condemnation of his fallen, earthly nature ; but the love of the Lord, shed abroad in his heart ; and when the grave has lost its victory, and death its envenomed sting ! Men have, in general, considered death only in a natural point of view, as meaning only a natural death, or the death of the body. But be assured, beloved, that as the body is not the man, but that the spirit is the true, living, and essential man ! so likewise the spiritual death, or the death of the divine truth and love of the Lord in our hearts, is the only true death. When man, however, has overcome the power of this spiritual death of love and truth ; when he is become truly sensible of his own nothingness, and in consequence of such sensibility looks unto the Lord alone, through his word ; and puts all his trust and confidence in his mercy, providence, and love ; he then feels, by happy experience, the full sense and meaning of those words of the Lord, where he says, “ And these signs shall follow them, that believe ; in my name they shall cast out

out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and, if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick ; and they shall recover." Blessed privileges these, indeed ! to the believing soul ! who by a firm trust, and confidence in the divine mercy, and a sincere and pure love for his law, and word, is thus enabled to " cast out" of his own heart the demons of pride, covetousness, self-love, anger, hatred, malice, revenge, high-mindedness, and all that legion of infernal foes, which before filled, and took possession of his spiritual man. He is thereby further enabled to " speak with a new tongue ;" inasmuch as evil being banished from his heart, from whence all evil proceedeth, his words, which before were only earthly, are now heavenly ; his language, which before was that of " Babel," is now become the language of the " heavenly Canaan." He is also further assisted in " taking up serpents ;" that is, in raising his own earthly, and groveling affections, of which the serpent is a true emblem, to the purity, blessedness, and life of heaven. It is also said of such, that " if he drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt him" ; that is, no hurtful doctrine, which may enter into his understanding, shall injure and defile him, inasmuch as being principled, and grounded in the pure, and eternal law of charity, and love, his will is yet fixed on the Lord, and devoted to his worship, and service. The last sign, which our Saviour mentions, is this, " he shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Here is a blessed end of all his disorders, and a sure recompence of all his labour : His sickly affections, his languid hope, his faint piety, his drooping confidence, and his expiring love, will, by the exertion of his free will, and the blessing of the Lord thereon,

thereon, all recover, and remain unmoved, and sure for ever.

Let us now, beloved, apply the words of my text, each of us to our own heart; and see, and examine how far we have heard the word of the Lord, and believed; how far we have escaped condemnation, and how far we are "passed from death unto life."

We have most of us heard the word of the Lord from our earliest years; we are most of us enabled to comprehend, in some degree, its import and meaning. This we are enabled to do, from the word of the Lord being always accounted holy and divine, and had in perpetual veneration, and regard; from the general acknowledgment that it is calculated to answer every blessed purpose for the re-establishing man in his original state of purity, and bliss. But all this will be of no service, or avail us any thing in the sight of the Lord, unless we have beheld therein, as in a faithful glass, or mirror, with spiritual eyes, the divine truth of the Lord; and have been enlightened, and refreshed thereby. Natural sight is adapted to the view of natural objects, and spiritual sight is adapted to the view of spiritual objects. Natural sight, therefore, or the reading, and hearing of the word of the Lord, with our natural eyes and ears only, can never be available to salvation. The inner, or spiritual, man must behold with spiritual eyes, and hear with spiritual ears, "the truth, as it is in Jesus," before he can receive benefit thereby; for so far as he falls short of hearing the Lord speaking spiritually in his word, so far the word becomes unto him as "a book, sealed up, and

a dead letter; when at the same time Our Lord himself assures us, that his "words, they are spirit, and they are life;" "spirit" for the enlightening, and instructing, and "life" for the warming, and supporting, all true believers in his name, and all faithful lovers, and followers of his law. To which of you, then, are they "spirit, and life?" Which of you can apply them inwardly for the cure of your spiritual disorders; and for the furtherance, and encouragement of your growth in the love, and truth of the Lord? Which of you have not heard twenty, thirty, or forty years, and have neither profited, nor been edified thereby? These are truths of an alarming nature; and (would to God) they were not so true, as they are! The disorder, and evil of sin is now raging in your very vitals---look inwardly---and there behold what ravage and destruction death has made in your hearts. Perhaps some of you may be inclined to think, or to say, that what I advance is not true---that you hear the word, and are delighted, and refreshed thereby---that you hear the word, I do not deny---but that you hear it only naturally, and not spiritually, I am much inclined to believe. Look at your conduct---look at your proceedings---look at your carriage through life. What alteration hath hearing the word made in your hearts? Where are the proofs, that you are followers, and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you "cast out" the devils of self-love, love of dominion, and love of the world? Do you "speak with new tongues" of the redeeming love, and power of the Lord Jesus in your souls? Have you "lifted up" or made holy, through the divine assistance, your carnal, earthly, and serpentine affections? Are you so grounded in the pure love of the Lord, that no
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false of doctrine, or errors of faith, can separate you from such pure love? Have you "laid hands upon the sick," upon your own spirits, sick with evil, oppressed with sin, disordered with misery, and at the point to die, and thus rescued them from condemnation, and death? Are you so holy, that you feel no condemnation? Are you so pure, that you wilfully commit no sin? If such be your happy experience, you feel no condemnation; if such be your state, you are not in the gall of bitterness, but "are passed from death unto life." You need no other testimony, but that of your own hearts; for, "if your heart condemn you not, then have you confidence towards God." "Search the scriptures;" for in them, if you look to the Lord for his illumination, you will find everlasting life; but, hear, on the contrary, what the Lord himself saith of such as reject his word, "He, that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath One, that judgeth him; the word, that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." May we all, therefore, labour to avoid condemnation! May we all labour to "pass from death unto life," in this world, that when our bodies shall be laid in the earth, our souls may receive everlasting life! And may the Lord in mercy assist our weak, yet faithful endeavours, to our unspeakable comfort, and his own Eternal Glory!—
Amen.

THE SERMON
 The doctrine of an instantaneous conversion
 him appear; that he did not enter believe, or pro-
 into a warm spirit, and lively mode of existence
 show us, that Paul himself, though often called on
 blessed Gospel of life and peace; and plainly
 reasoning, founded upon, and drawn from the ever-
 lasting. They abound with solid and valuable
 material.

SERMON VIII.

COR. II. Chap. iii. Ver. 18.

"BUT WE ALL, WITH OPEN FACE, BEHOLDING, AS IN A
 "GLASS, THE GLORY OF THE LORD, ARE CHANGED
 "INTO THE SAME IMAGE, FROM GLORY TO GLORY,
 "EVEN AS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD."

FALLEN, and degraded as mankind is by sin, the Lord of life and glory hath afforded a variety of means, and multiplicity of helps, whereby he may come out of his present short and perishing state, into a future, long, and everlasting rest. How amazing is the divine wisdom! How amiable the divine mercy! How unutterable the divine love! Amongst many passages of sacred scripture, which point out to us the means of coming to the Great Redeemer, and being made happy with him, the words of my text, are not the least satisfactory, or useful. They abound with solid and substantial reasoning, founded upon, and drawn from, the ever-blessed Gospel of Life and Peace; and plainly shew us, that Paul himself, though often called out into a warm spirit, and lively mode of expression, was not that enthusiast, which some would make him appear; that he did not either believe, or propagate, the doctrine of an instantaneous conversion, but

but a gradual, regular, orderly, and divine reformation, and consequent regeneration, "from glory to glory," according to the usual dispensations of the Lord's divine providence, and according to man's qualification and state of receiving such things, and such communications, as his spiritual mind was "able to bear." Let me, therefore, bespeak your most serious attention, whilst I endeavour, through the divine mercy, to shew you, according to the words of my text,

First, What is meant by "Face;" and what by "Open Face;"

Secondly, What is meant by "Glass," and what by "beholding as in a Glass;"

Thirdly, What is signified by "the Glory of the Lord;"

Fourthly, What is signified by an "Image" of the Lord, and how, in consequence of "beholding, as in a glass, with open face, the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;" for "we all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord:"---And may the Lord, in mercy, enable each of us so to hear, that we may be enabled at last to acknowledge, that we have arrived at this blessed state, that we have been changed from glory to glory, not only into the same image, but also into the same likeness, with himself, by beholding, as in a glass, his glory, even by the influence, and blessedness of his Spirit.

First,

First, then, let us endeavour to shew, what is meant by "Face," and what by "Open Face;" "but we all with open face."

If we look at the words, as they relate to the outward, or the external body, we shall soon be enabled to shew what is meant by "Face." The face, we know, is that part of man, which is placed in the highest external situation; and is the index, or sign, by which we may, in general, form a right judgment concerning the whole man. It is according to the various changes and appearances of such external face or countenance, that we prove, and discover the different workings of "pride, malice, revenge, uncharitableness," and every other fallen affection and temper, as well as the opposite virtues of "humility, good-will, charity, and love." A shy, averted, and distant look, or countenance is the object of our censure, manifesting a narrow, contracted, and unfeeling heart:---A free, pleasing face, and open countenance is the object of our affection, manifesting a generous, loving, and tender spirit. Such are the uses, and such the signs of a face unopened, and the countenance, which is open, accommodated to the view and observation of the material eye, and affording matter of judgment to the minute observer. But, beloved, this is not "the face," which the Apostle mentioned or meant; nor that openness, which the Apostle holdeth out in the words of my text. The "face," which he intended to point out to us, is a spiritual face; which alone is capable of beholding spiritual objects, and which alone can be read, and known by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Redeemer, and him alone. The face, here mentioned,

mentioned, therefore, is the heart of man, which is his true face, on which is written, in indelible characters, the quality, nature, tempers, and affections of his life. When man is in a fallen, unregenerate state; when he is living in the love of all evil, and in the practice of all ungodliness, his "face," that is, his heart, is then ugly and unpleasant; beholding only sensual objects; seeking only sensual comforts; causing nothing but aversion, and disgust to all around. When man, however, is in a state of regeneration, his "face" is then said to be "open," that is, his heart, which is the only true spiritual "face," is filled with every amiable appearance and manifestation of goodness; it is seen as amiable, and agreeable; it beholdeth only spiritual objects; it seeketh only spiritual comforts; and giveth comfort, and happiness to all around. It is according to this explanation of the word "face," that the Lord saith, "I the Lord try the heart, and the reins;" and that we say in our Communion Service, "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open," where by heart, is meant, the spiritual face, which is the only index, by which man's nature, life and spirit is known and discovered. Such is the "open face," mentioned, in my text; and such will our experience of it be, when we look through the outward letter of scripture into the inward spirit, and blessed power thereof.

Let us now, Secondly, consider, What is meant by "Glass," and what by "beholding as in a glass."

We have already considered what is meant by "open face," namely a "pure heart;" and here let us stop to admire, and adore the love, the mercy, the divine order, the blessed instruction and information

tion of the Great Redeemer, who hath so regularly pointed out to us his unutterable goodness, according to our necessity and want of information. The Apostle does not here say, "beholding with open face," but "with open face beholding," as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." This little variation of the reading may appear to some of no consequence, as making no difference in the sense, or alteration in the meaning. Permit me, however, beloved, to say, that this is by no means the case; but that every word is regularly placed, according to the divine order, and according to the regular process, and progress of the Lord's redeeming and regenerating love, and truth, in the hearts and lives of his true disciples.

Our Lord's divine sermon upon the Mount proclaimed the first view, or sight, of God to the "pure in heart;" "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." St. Paul, thus in like manner, points out to us the "open face," that is the pure heart, "before we behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord." It is, indeed, by means of truths in the understanding, that man is enabled to learn his duty, to know the divine will, and to direct his paths; but then that truth is only natural truth, until we have a love for that truth, which love maketh it to become spiritual, and thus enableth us to "behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord." St. Paul, speaking of those, who did not believe, in the verses preceding my text, says, "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart; nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away;" where by reading Moses is signified the reading of truths contained in the books of Moses; and by the vail is meant, that carnal, fallen, sensual love, which prevented

vented them from seeing and thus receiving and practising the holy commandments of the Lord. In like manner, by "glass," here mentioned, is meant, not a natural, or material glass, but an holy and spiritual glass.

A glass, or mirrour, we know, is a material object, which is so fashioned and constructed, as to afford to every beholder a view or sight of every thing, which is held before it. Man cannot, however, with his face covered, look into such material glass, much less behold any object, which is represented therein; but it is necessary, that his face be uncovered, or open, that thus his eyes may be at liberty to behold the prospect of things before them. The glass, therefore, here mentioned, in which we are to look, is no other than the unsullied, and transparent, and ever-blessed word of the Lord, or the sacred word of divine truth, into which we are directed to look, with "open face," with a pure heart, with upright intentions, with sincere love, wishing to behold whatever is unclean, that we may, through the divine mercy, wash off our defilements, and wishing to behold whatever is pure, that we may bring it into our own hearts, suffer it to operate in our lives, and manifest itself in a faithful observance of, and humble obedience to, the divine commandments. To what soul is not the holy word of the Lord a faithful glass? Who cannot discern therein his own state? Who cannot behold therein his own "face," the picture of his own heart? When the "face is not open," but, "the vail is upon the heart," we can see nothing but that condemnation, and death eternal, which will ever be the portion of the impenitent, and unholy in the world to come; but when "with open face

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we behold, and the vail is taken away," we shall behold nothing but life eternal, and "the Glory of the Lord."

Let us now, therefore, Thirdly enquire, What is signified by "the Glory of the Lord."

We have already said, that by "glass," is meant not a natural glass, but a spiritual one, which is the holy word of the Lord, or the blessed word of divine truth. The object, therefore, which we are herein called to behold, is no less than "the Glory of the Lord," which of all objects is the most amiable and lovely; inasmuch as hereby we may be enabled to behold the Lord himself, and all the blessed realities of his eternal kingdom. Mankind, unhappily for themselves, have viewed the sacred scriptures, or holy word of the Lord, too long, as only a natural glass, adapted only to shew the natural beauties of a specious morality, or the natural imperfections, which are ever attendant upon the infirmities of human nature. Thus have they, from time to time, looked no further into the holy word, than the bare, outward letter, and thus have never considered, that the words of the Lord are "spirit and life." The sacred scriptures, however, contain information, and instruction, not only, according to the outward letter, but also as to their internal and spiritual meaning, which is called by St. Paul, "the Glory of the Lord." Spiritual, or divine truth, is the only medium, by which man is reformed, redeemed, and regenerated to all eternity. Natural truth can only affect and benefit the natural mind; natural truth, alone, therefore, can be of no avail---Natural truth is finite---the "Glory of the Lord," which we are called upon,
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“with open face to behold,” is infinite.—The outward word, must therefore, have an internal and spiritual meaning, adapted to that “purity of heart,” which we have endeavoured to inculcate; and suited to the use of that “open face,” by which we may be enabled to behold spiritual objects, and hold a spiritual communication and converse with the God and Father of all spirits, the Great Redeemer, and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Man is not man merely because he hath an outward body, and outward life—these are not man—but he is man, as he hath also an inward body, and inward life, which is the true man, and which is enabled, through the divine mercy, and its own co-operation therewith, “with open face to behold, as in a glass,” even in the holy word of truth, “the Glory of the Lord,” even an inward and spiritual sense; suited and adapted to the nourishment and comfort, to the growth and perfection of its own nature, life, and spirit, both in time and in eternity; and “changing it into the same image with the Lord, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Having now considered, what is meant by “the Glory of the Lord,” let us now, Fourthly, endeavour to shew, what is meant by an “image” of the Lord; and how, in consequence of “with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

By “an image of the Lord” is meant the spiritual mind, or the spiritual man, who is in love towards the Lord, and charity towards his neighbour. When man is in a state of celestial love, he is then

called a likeness of the Lord; because he is then like unto the Lord, being guided only by pure celestial love, which hath swallowed up the appearance of truth. Such was the state of the most ancient church, who knew nothing of faith or truth, till the fall; but were then favoured with faith, or truth, as a conveying medium, or means of regaining that first heavenly state of celestial life and love. The fallen state of man, therefore, at the present day, maketh it necessary, that he should thus, through faith or truth, or by means of the internal spiritual sense of the word, which is contained in the letter of scripture, as the soul within the body, "be renewed in the spirit of his mind;" and be "changed into the same image, from glory to glory." The necessity of such a change from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth; from death unto life; from sin unto a state of heavenly love, is held forth in every part of scripture. Our fallen nature must be restored---Our decayed, and impaired faculties must be enlivened and repaired by the divine truth of the Lord; otherwise we can never attain everlasting life: St. Paul assureth us, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" and the Lord saith by St. John, "He, that heareth my word, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Regeneration, or a new birth, therefore, is a "passage from death unto life;" or a change of heart from what is false and evil, to what is true and good; a change of will, a change of love from sensual to rational and spiritual objects; and this regeneration, or new birth is effected by means of the holy word of divine truth, which our Lord meant when he said, "Sanctify thou them through thy truth; thy word is truth." The progress to this state
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of sanctification is gradual, according to the regular order of the Lord's divine providence ; which our Lord himself declareth, when he saith, " I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." O how amiable is the divine goodness, which ever accompanieth its communications to our capacity or power of receiving or enjoying them ! Many, alas ! would limit the mercies of redemption to a part of mankind. Every passage of scripture, however, fairly opened, contradict such a system. " Come unto," &c. and again it is written, " Whosoever is athirst, let him come, and take of the water of life freely" --and again in my text, " we *all* with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." May we all, then, without exception, immediately open our hearts to the love of the Lord and his holy word ! May we all view that holy word, as a glass, in which we can see our own image, our own spiritual state ; and may we, through the divine mercy, be enabled so to view ourselves, that we may behold therein the "glory of the Lord," that is a spiritual sense and meaning ; which, by our faithful use thereof, will "change us from glory to glory," from state to state, "into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." And, above all, may we always look to the Lord alone, through, and in his word, for the guidance and direction of his Holy Spirit herein ; acknowledging, that though we use the means, yet we only co-operate with him ; and ascribing to him, and him alone, the praise, the honour, the glory and power, both in time and in eternity !

S E R M O N

SERMON IX.

EPIST. GALATIANS. Chap. v. Ver. 6.

"FOR, IN JESUS CHRIST, NEITHER CIRCUMCISION AVAIL-
ETH ANY THING, NOR UNCIRCUMCISION; BUT FAITH;
WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE."

TO be religious, or to seem to be religious, is the sincere wish, and ardent desire, of every creature. What true religion is, however, is the grand object of enquiry; inasmuch as all fondly persuade themselves, that their own conceptions of it are the most rational, and their own definition of it the most intelligible, and plain. Thus did the professors of old time, and thus still do unenlightened devotees, espouse a cause they know not why, and follow a tenet, which they do not understand. The warm church-man can allow nothing to be religion, but what is confined to a particular form; the rigid dissenter can admit of nothing, which is bound up in rites and ceremonies, as true piety; whilst the more moderate of either party pretend to, and profess, no more of godliness, than what will secure them from being stigmatized with the opprobrious name of Atheist, Infidel, or Heathen.

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Such has been, and such will be, the conduct of mankind ; till truth is sought after, and desired, for its own intrinsic beauty ; and goodness loved and practised, from a full conviction of its amiable nature, and power to make us happy. But where can we find this inestimable jewel ? Where can we taste this food of heaven, this bread of angels, this feast of love ? Where ; but in the obedience of the divine commandments ? Where ; but in the belief of every sacred, and heavenly truth ; and in the sincere love of, and affection for, every divine perfection, accomplishment, and virtue ? Difficult it, however, is to bring mankind to a full, and real acknowledgement of these truths. The Apostle found it so in his time ; and every faithful servant of his master has but too much reason to lament, that the same weak, and delusive superstition, and fancy still lead astray, the confident, the diffident, the obstinate, and the desponding. St. Paul has, however, given us the sure marks of a true christian profession in the words of my text, when he says, " For, in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith, that worketh by love." Let me, therefore, bespeak your most serious attention to these words, whilst we endeavour to shew,

First, What it is to be " in Jesus Christ ;"

Secondly, Point out, that " neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth any thing" to those, who are in Jesus Christ ;

Thirdly, Endeavour to prove, that " Faith, which worketh by love," is the only proof, and sign of our belonging to Jesus Christ, and being in him."

First,

First, then, What is meant by Jesus Christ, and what by being in him.

By Jesus Christ, when mentioned in the holy word, is always signified a principle, or a spirit of divine truth, operating, and manifesting itself by acts of goodness, and labours of love. The reason, and certainty of this is evident; because the Lord Jesus Christ, who declares himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life," was always exercised in, and always displaying, his love to fallen man, by "unstopping the deaf ears, opening the blind eyes, making the lame to walk, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, comforting the weak, encouraging the distressed, and confirming the strong." Mercy, charity, and love were manifested to all around, who were willing to receive it; and the heart, which knew its own bitterness, and sought to be delivered therefrom, was never sent away with its wants unsupplied, or its miseries unrelieved.

To be "in Jesus Christ," therefore, signifies to be guided, and governed by his spirit, to partake of his nature, to be employed in works of kindness, mercy, benevolence, and good-will, to be meek, humble, and lowly in heart, or in the language of the Apostle to have "the same mind in us, which was also in Christ Jesus." Whenever this is the real state of our hearts; whenever we are seeking what is true, and desirous of living in the practice of that truth; whenever we believe in Jesus Christ, and make good our faith by love and obedience, then it is, that we are "in Jesus Christ"; then it is, that "he dwells in us, and we in him, that he is One with us, and

and we with him." From this description of being in Jesus Christ, it will be easy to discover those, who are not in Jesus Christ, but who are separated from him, and have no conjunction with him. Wherever the Lord Jesus Christ is, there is life, and that life manifests itself as a living birth, proceeding from, and operating by, the divine power of the Father of all spirits. Wherever there is life, there also is action; and every action takes its complexion from the nature and quality of that life, from which it proceeds, and by which it is directed. It is the nature of a worldly action to partake of a worldly spirit, inasmuch as it has its foundation in a fallen, and earthly love, which is its life; and it is the nature of a pure, upright action to partake of a pure and upright spirit; because it proceeds from a spiritual and divine love, which is its life. The man, therefore, who "is in Jesus Christ," will always discover himself by his actions; he will always endeavour to manifest, and impart of his love to others, from a love of usefulness, and a desire of being serviceable; he will see nothing true, but what is agreeable to the truth, as it is in Jesus; nor any thing good, which does not partake of the nature of God, who is goodness, and love itself; he will see every thing in reality, not in appearance only, "for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

When man is in an earthly, carnal, and unregenerate state, he is enabled to see nothing, but what his bodily eye, or natural sight can view. His heart, his will, his desires, and his thoughts being earthly, and sensual, partake only of the nature, and

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spirit, and temper of outward things. Thus he is led by appearances to expect life, where there is no life; to call darkness light, and light darkness; to call evil good, and good evil; to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Such was the conduct of St. Paul of old, who, while his understanding was enlightened only with worldly wisdom, beheld nothing of an inward and vital religion; but confined his worship to externals only; having the form of godliness, but not the power. Like many of our modern professors, all his godliness was confined to rites, and ceremonies, to outward washings, and cleansings, to outward purifyings, whilst within he was full of all impurity; whilst, like the whited sepulchre, he was "full of dead men's bones, and all unrighteousness." No sooner, however, had the light of heaven, the divine truth of the Lord, shined upon the darkened eye of his understanding; no sooner had he heard that tender expostulation, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" than he was convinced all his formality was without an inward life, and principle, and consequently not available to salvation. To remove these prejudices, to convince his hearers, that external worship was not devotion, but a change of heart, and life, a change of will and understanding, a change of affections and desires, a change of objects and pursuits, a change of practice, and a change of the whole man, was his constant study, his constant labour, and his constant care. Under this delusion were his Galatian converts, who were desirous of being circumcised according to the flesh. He, however, tenderly exhorts them "not to abuse their christian liberty, not again to be entangled with the yoke of bondage, but to stand fast in that liberty, wherewith Christ hath

hath made them free ;" inasmuch as Circumcision is that of the heart, a putting away, and removing every earthly, carnal, and sensual affection, principle, and desire, in the spirit, and not in the letter. Such is the acknowledgment of true religion from the sincere worshipper, and true Christian ; whose spiritual eye is open to the contemplation of divine things, who understands, that not outward, but inward devotion, not external form, but internal operation are the great essentials of religion, which will manifest themselves outwardly to the world in all the simplicity of genuine piety, and all the beauty of a divine life. The ground of the heart, the spring from which all our actions proceed, is the first object to be attended to ; inasmuch as " from the heart of man, from within, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness ; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man." To pretend to worship God with the body, in the outward form, whilst the inward parts are thus full of wickedness ; to profess in word that we love God, yet deny him in works, is such manifest hypocrisy, such daring presumption, and such flagrant impiety, that it is much to be wondered, how mankind can, or thus dare, delude, and ruin themselves. If such be our condition, beloved, let us in time bethink us, what we are about ; for whilst we are thus earthly-minded, whilst we are pursuing a shadow, but leaving the substance, we are in a state of spiritual death, and exposed to all those miseries which are ever attendant upon the thoughtless, the impenitent, and the unbelieving.

But let us now, Lastly, consider, by what means we can come to Jesus, and what are the sure signs and proofs, that we are in him.

The Apostle has given us a very full, yet short account of what is available to salvation; when he says, "For, in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love." Faith, therefore, and love are the great requisites of all true religion; and are so inseparably united, that one cannot exist without the other, but that either would perish without the other. But how are faith and love to be applied as means of bringing us to Christ, and how are they available to salvation? The answer is very plain and clear.---- Know, then, that in every man, there are two principles, the will, and the understanding, which form one mind: they are distinct principles, each having its distinct office to perform, yet, when regularly cultivated and attended to, unite in producing the same blessed end, and purpose, the recovery of fallen man from his state of misery and death to a life of happiness, immortality, and eternal joy. Faith, therefore, which the Apostle here mentions, or truth, which is the same thing, is what is applied to the understanding of man; and love, which manifesteth that faith, is applied to the will. Thus it is, that man thirsts after truth, with his understanding, and hungers after love with his will; that he drinks wisdom with his understanding, and feeds upon love with his will. The Apostle does not say faith alone, or love alone, but "faith, that worketh by love." Some, however, have unhappily deluded themselves by asserting that faith alone can save a man, or that the bare act of believing will justify them before God.

God. Faith alone, however, or truth, will never save a man---it may convince, but cannot convert--- It is love, pure, heavenly, and divine love, which purifieth the whole heart. A man may believe ten thousand truths, and yet not love one---but will his acknowledging them be sufficient? No---for it is written, "Not the hearers of the law, but the doers of the law are justified before God;" and our Lord says, "Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you;" and again, "If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them;" where love manifesting the amiableness of truth, and not truth alone, is considered as producing in us eternal life.

Faith and love, therefore, or goodness and truth are the means, whereby we may, and must, attain everlasting life; and wherever the outward action, or life is not agreeable to the commandments, or obedient to the divine will, there, it is evident, one, or both of these essentials are wanting; inasmuch as from the regular order and union of these two, that is, faith, and love, a third is always produced; viz. obedience, or a regular, orderly, pious, holy, and upright life.

To conclude. Whatever opinion we may hitherto have entertained of religion, let us rest assured, that outward worship only is not vital piety; that the language of the lips is not always the language of the heart; but that inward devotion alone is that, which can make us happy both here and hereafter. All external forms are good, which are regular, and orderly; they are, however, lifeless, without the corresponding principle of the heart. We may have ten thousand forms, but without life,

we may utter ten thousand prayers, but without spirit; and we may live all our lives in "the form of godliness, but without the power." Like Paul of old, we may censure, we may blame, we may persecute those, who are "not on our part;" but, when, like Paul, the heavenly light, the truth of the Lord, shines in upon us, we shall then see, that opinion is not religion; that zeal is not piety; and that faith is not the essential principle of religion; for St. Paul saith, "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing;" and again, "now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity."

May we all, therefore, beloved, seek after the best gifts! May we not rest contented with a bare form of piety, but cultivate the inward ground of the heart! May we not place religion in the bare appearance of it, but may we all be led to enquire after truth; from truth be induced to practise what is good, from a spirit, and principle of love; from looking upon the letter, to look into the spirit; and from being christians in name only, to become christians in practice, in heart, in life, in love; and thus be enabled to comprehend, to understand, and to acknowledge, "That in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith, that worketh by love."

SERMON

SERMON X.

ST. MATTHEW, Chap. vi. Ver. 11.

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

TO pray to, and supplicate the divine mercy and providence of the Lord, has ever been acknowledged the first of christian duties, and the only possible way of attaining eternal life. Man, with respect to his own powers, is nothing but weakness, poverty, and want; his greatest attainments serve only to shew him his dependance; and his brightest prospects and sweetest comforts point out to him his numerous obligations to his bountiful God, and Redeemer, benefactor, and friend. Doubtless, it is the first dawning of wisdom to confess our own insufficiency to help ourselves; for, till we are fully, and experimentally convinced of this, we shall never be induced to apply to any other. Well, therefore, might our Lord teach his disciples, and in them all future christians, that comprehensive, yet humiliating form of prayer, which is calculated to point out to us every want, and the means of having those wants, and miseries relieved. Of all the petitions none appears more important than the words of my text, "Give us this day our daily bread;" inasmuch as it contains

contains every thing requisite both for the natural, and spiritual life, both for this world, and the world to come. Let us, therefore, consider the subject in this two-fold sense, whilst we endeavour to shew,

First, What need we have of receiving, and why we say, "Give us;"

Secondly, What we are to understand by "this day;"

Thirdly, What is meant by "daily bread;"

And Lastly, Point out the improper, and unreasonable conduct of those, who are not satisfied with their "daily bread."

The subject is interesting to every one of us. Let us, therefore, carefully consider,

First, What need we have of receiving, and why we say, "Give us."

We are all of us sufficiently sensible, what numberless wants, and necessities we are encompassed with at all times, and in all places; and we are further persuaded, that we have not, in ourselves, resources to alleviate, or remove them. But to be a little more particular. We know, that natural nourishment is requisite for the support of this natural body; but we are not able to procure it from ourselves. We cannot form a single grain of corn, neither can we cause it to grow, or bring forth abundantly. The same may be said of every article, which is required for the support of the body. All must proceed from some source, or fountain, which is able to give and bestow such things, and in such proportion, as we need; and this source, and this fountain,

fountain, we know, is God, who is both able to form, and also to bestow, without measure, such things, as are useful to us. His bountiful goodness, and his watchful providence is ever pouring forth from his creative hand the good things of this life; whilst man has nothing to do, but to "ask, and receive," and appropriate those good things to himself.---
 "Give us," therefore, implies an acknowledgment, that these blessings and comforts are not our own; that they are not from ourselves; that they are only afforded to us by the Lord, as means to make us happy; and, if properly understood, implies an entire resignation, and dependance upon, not our own powers, and abilities, but upon the divine will, love, affection, and care of our heavenly parent, and friend. Such resignation as this, and such application, as this, is sure never to depart unsatisfied; inasmuch as the Lord himself hath said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." What we have hitherto advanced, hath relation only to the body, or bodily life; let us, however, consider, as was proposed, what need we have of receiving spiritual food, and why we say, "Give us."

Man, with respect to his spiritual life, is equally weak, poor, indigent, helpless, and distressed. His will is only earthly, fallen, and a slave to sin, death, and hell; his understanding is dark, overclouded, and a slave to ignorance, falsehood, and error; whilst every affection, and every perception serves only to increase his malady, and aggravate his deplorable condition. He has not, however, in himself, resources to remove this spiritual death. His spiritual life, or soul, nevertheless, hath need of nourishment, but this

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he hath not in himself. He has not life in himself; he is only an organ, or vessel, capable of receiving, and enjoying life from the Lord. He cannot, of himself, think a good thought, form a pure affection, or beget heavenly wisdom. These helps, and these nourishments must, therefore, proceed from some pure, and heavenly source, and fountain, which is capable of forming, and bestowing them, in such manner, and in such proportion, as we need; and this source is the Lord, who is life itself, and imparteth of that life abundantly to all, who are willing to receive it. He is ever pouring out his spiritual blessings upon us; and all, that we have to do, is to open our hearts to receive, to appropriate, and make them our own. "Give us," therefore, implies, that these blessings are not from ourselves, but only administered to us as means to restore us to happiness, and eternal life; and, if properly understood, signifies such an entire dependance upon the Lord, as fully demonstrates our trust and confidence in his redeeming, and regenerating love, and truth.

Let us now endeavour to shew, Secondly, What we are to understand by "this day."

According to the natural sense, we all know, that by "this day" is signified, that period of time, which then is. To pray, therefore, that the Lord would "give us this day," what we want, implies not only a sense of our dependance, but likewise an humble supplication for what is merely sufficient for the present; wishing rather to entrust to him the management of our comforts, than rashly, and unthinkingly take them into our own keeping, where they would be unsafe, and insecure. According to the

the literal sense, it appears, at first sight, rather to apply to the worldly poor, than to the world at large : but, beloved, it reaches all states, and all conditions ; inasmuch as no earthly comforts are for a moment secure, but soon “ make themselves wings, and flee away.”

With respect to the spiritual sense, we shall see, that there is no difference between worldly rich, and worldly poor, but that all, without exception, have abundant reason to say, “ Give us this day.”

By “ day,” when spiritually applied, we are not to understand day ; neither by “ night” are we to understand night ; but by “ day” we are to understand a state of love towards the Lord, or a state of divine truth ; and by night, a state of no love or truth towards the Lord. Such is the sense, in which Our Lord himself uses it, when he says, “ Walk ye, therefore, in the light, that ye may be the children of the light,” where light, is put for day, and signifies a state of divine love and truth ; inasmuch, as where there is no light, that is, no love, and truth, there is darkness, or night ; and therefore he says, “ Walk, while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you ; for he, that walketh in darkness, knoweth not, whither he goeth.” Again, he saith, “ I must work the works of him, that sent me, while it is day ; the night cometh, wherein no man can work.” Our Lord himself, as being the fountain of all life and light, is called the “ day-spring,” where it is written, “ The day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them, that sit in darkness, and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”—“ Give us this day,” therefore, signifies, “ Give us,”

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according to our states, such spiritual blessings, as are best suited to our power of receiving them ; inasmuch as without a proper and constant supply, our spiritual life would perish, and we should be utterly undone. We should do well here to observe, beloved, the propriety of always approaching, and applying to the Lord, in all our distresses, and of leaving all to him ; because he alone knoweth our wants, and is both willing and able to relieve them.

Let us now consider, Thirdly, What is meant by " Daily Bread."

By " bread," in a natural sense, is meant every thing necessary for the nourishment and support of the natural, or bodily life. By praying that the Lord would " give us this day our daily bread," we understand such a just proportion of every thing necessary, as will keep us, and preserve us, from those wants, which would otherwise distress us. Should we ask for more, than what is sufficient for the day, we could not enjoy it. To apply, or use more than was agreeable to our nature, would only serve to destroy us ; it would only introduce into our frame, disorder, sickness, disease, and death ; and we should make the greatest blessings, which we enjoy, that is, the bountiful gifts of providence, our greatest evils, by a superabundant use, and misapplication of them. Every thinking mind will see, therefore, how much it is his interest, to ask only for so much as he can enjoy ; for so much as he can use, but not abuse ; because things of every description, whatever they are, are not in themselves injurious, but the improper manner, in which they are applied, rendereth them hurtful. Just so it is, with respect to the application

plication of nourishment for our spiritual life, which is here signified by "daily bread."

By "bread," when spiritually applied in the scriptures, or the holy word, is signified the divine good, or the divine love of the Lord; and by "water, wine, or drink," is signified the divine truth, or wisdom of the Lord. Here, however, it signifies both, inasmuch as it is put to express every thing, which our spiritual nature requires. By praying, therefore, that the Lord would "give us this day our daily bread," we may understand our desiring, and requesting such constant supplies of his divine love and truth, and in such proportion, as our necessities require, and our states can bear. Should we wish for more of his love, or more of his truth, than we have a sincere "hungering, and thirsting" for, it would only, like an inordinate application of natural food, tend to overwhelm, and destroy us; for man can only receive the divine love of the Lord into his will, and his truth into his understanding, according to his inward desire of, and affection for them; neither can the Lord impart to man more than man is willing to receive. Our Lord shewed the reasonableness of this to his disciples, when he said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now:" As if he had said,

"When I first received you for my disciples, ye were utter strangers to the nature of my kingdom, and the great, and important objects, and end, which I had in view. In this weak estate, I fed you with such food, such displays of truth and mercy, as your tender understanding could bear; and revealed such holy mysteries, as you could comprehend.

"prehend. I have fed you "day by day," that is,
 "from state to state, with my instructions, and pre-
 "cepts ; ye have passed from infancy to childhood,
 "from childhood to young men ; but ye are not yet
 "arrived at manhood. The mild rays of my love
 "ye may receive, and it will nourish, and support
 "you ; but in your present condition, my brighter
 "beams, and stronger heat would but consume you.
 "Be satisfied with these gifts ; and, when ye can re-
 "ceive more, rest assured, that I will bestow more,
 "for "I will not leave you comfortless, but will come
 "again unto you," and lead you into all the fullness
 "of my love."

Such we may reasonably suppose was the affectionate language of love from our Lord to his disciples of old, and such is his constant language to all those, who are journeying towards the heavenly Canaan, and striving to secure "a better inheritance, even an heavenly, and eternal rest."

Let us, now lastly, consider the improper conduct of those, who are not satisfied with their "daily bread," but are eagerly seeking after, and coveting more than they can use and enjoy.

To this class, and description of men the generality of mankind unhappily belong. Prone to indolence in spiritual things ; ignorant of their best interests, and provident only of outward comforts ; they cannot embrace the pleasures of that dispensation, which teacheth us to desire only our "daily bread," and to commit the keeping of ourselves unto the Lord. To be careful for the future is the characteristic of man ; but it is a carefulness, and fore-sight, which

which has not heavenly, but earthly, not spiritual, but carnal objects in view. It cannot but be matter of serious reflection, to behold men trusting to the Lord alone, without any exertion on their own parts, for spiritual favors, spiritual blessings, and eternal happiness; but refusing to trust him with their worldly concerns, calling his providence in question, and doubtful of his impartial and just administration. See the man of business, plodding after riches, and endeavouring to secure a competency for life: Behold another laying up in store, that he may indulge in pleasures, and surfeit in gratifications, yet unattained: Turn your eyes to a third, and view him hoarding up his precious treasure, only to contemplate, and adore it at his leisure. What can we say of such men, beloved? Can they address the Lord, and pray, "Give us this day our daily bread?" Do they feel their obligations to the beneficent giver of all things? Surely, their practice contradicts their pretensions, and charity itself must reject their plea.

But these are not the only men, who are culpable: the contagion is more universal; the malady more alarming; and the evil more widely spread. Shall I spare myself the painful recital? Shall I pass over the deplorable truth? Or shall I rather declare, that this distrust of the divine providence of the Lord hath entered even the habitations of poverty, the abodes of indigence, and the dwellings of want. This, surely, is aggravated ingratitude; and accumulated guilt. To have been fed from "day to day," literally, and truly, in a manner almost, miraculous; to have been supported in a way, almost beyond belief; to have lived, according to a common expression, we know not how; and yet to doubt his goodness,

ness, by anxiously desiring to lay up for the morrow, is a crime, which no language can describe, a conduct, which wants a name !

Such, however, is not the anxious solicitude of providing heavenly food, and heavenly enjoyments ! The better part, the real man; the heavenly principle, is suffered to want, in the midst of plenty, and pine away, though surrounded with abundance. And yet, beloved, this is the only part, that must live for ever, either in the full enjoyment of the pure love, and truth of the Lord, which is eternal life ; or separate from that love and truth, which is a state of misery, condemnation, and death.

To conclude. Amidst all the vicissitudes, with which human life is chequered, let us remember, and remember for our comfort, that we are under the immediate care of the divine providence of the Lord, who will give us all things useful, and profitable for us ; according to our capacities of receiving, and enjoying them. Let us not murmur, because we cannot obtain, what we wish ; for of such St. James speaks, when he says, “ Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” But, above all things, when we pray, let us pray not only for the “ daily bread,” which must support our bodies, but for that “ daily bread” of heaven, which must support our souls, even for the pure love, and redeeming wisdom, and truth of the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we beg of the Lord thus “ daily” to feed us ; if our “ hearts are thus athirst for God, even the living God ;” if we thus ask, in humble dependance upon the divine goodness, we shall not miscarry, or sue in vain ;

vain; for the scripture assureth us, that " he, who thus asketh, receiveth, and his joy shall be full."---
 May we all of us, beloved, ask in this manner! May we all of us labour thus to address our Heavenly Father, from the ground of our heart, " give us this day our daily bread;" and may we at last experience the happy sensibility of having eaten the " bread of heaven, the body of the Lord Jesus Christ," by which, and through which alone we can be happy to all eternity!---Amen.

P. M. SERMON

SERMON XI.

ST. LUKE, Chap. i. Part of Ver. 78, 79.

“ THE DAY-SPRING FROM ON HIGH HATH VISITED US,
TO GIVE LIGHT TO THEM, THAT SIT IN DARKNESS,
AND IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH, TO GUIDE OUR FEET
INTO THE WAY OF PEACE.”

TO enquire into the ways of divine wisdom, in order to become acquainted with the blessed truths of the word of the Lord, and to profit thereby, is the grand privilege, and greatest happiness of man. The thick mists of ignorance, and the darkened clouds of falsehood, with which he is surrounded, and in which he is enveloped, call aloud for light and illumination, to guide and direct his wandering footsteps, lest, peradventure, he be lost in darkness, and swallowed up in the shadow of death. Blessed, therefore, be the God, and Father of all mercy, that a light hath shined, and that illumination hath been given, whereby the children of men may be enabled to see, and to know, how they may be rescued from their miseries; inasmuch as it is written, in the words of my text, “ The day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them, that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

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Let me bespeak, therefore, your most serious attention, beloved, to a subject so interesting, and important; to a subject, which is the fulfilment of every prophetic promise, and blessing; and the accomplishment of which in our own hearts can alone secure to us the blessedness of heaven, and eternal life. And may the Lord, who alone is light in himself, so enlighten my understanding to explain and reveal his word; and so enlarge your capacities to comprehend his will, that we may both rejoice together, to his honour and glory, and to our own unspeakable comfort, and peace.

The words of my text acquaint us, that "The day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them, that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." Let us, therefore enquire,

First, What is meant by "Day-spring from on high;" and what by "visiting us."

Secondly, consider, For what purpose "The day-spring from on high hath visited us;" and what need we had of such visitation.

First, then, What is meant by "Day-spring from on high," and what by "visiting us."

I have often informed you, beloved, that the sacred scriptures, or the word of the Lord were written by correspondencies; that is, that natural things, and natural expressions are used to express and shew forth the spirituality, and internal meaning of such natural things, and expressions; whereby man is enabled to become acquainted with the Lord,

the nature, usefulness, end, and blessedness of his kingdom ; and from such acquaintance, to have conjunction, and be made happy, with him. The words of my text abound with this correspondence ; and man, without such a mode, or manner of expression, could never have been enabled fully, and clearly to comprehend the nature and meaning of that great, and deep design of the divine goodness, and wisdom, which was manifested unto us by the incarnation of the Great Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ.

By *Day*, in a former discourse, I have informed you, when applied to the spiritual man, or the spiritual life of man, is not meant outward, or natural days, and periods of time, but spiritual *Days*, or States of Grace, that is, States of Divine Wisdom, or Love towards the Lord, and the things of his Eternal Kingdom. As for instance, If man be in a state of ignorance, and falsehood, with respect to the Lord ; if he be unacquainted with the usefulness, power, and efficacy of his word ; if he be, in consequence of such ignorance, immersed in evil, given to the gratification of every fallen appetite and desire, and following only the delights of this world, and the flesh, he is then said to “ walk in darkness, and in the night ;” or to have no “ light in him.” Should he, however, on the contrary, be in a state of intelligence, and wisdom, with respect to the Lord ; should he be acquainted with the usefulness, power, and efficacy of his word ; should he, in consequence of such understanding, live in the practice of goodness, nourishing, and encouraging every heavenly affection, and desire, and seeking only the sweet delights of a spiritual and an eternal kingdom ;
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he is then said to "walk in the light, and in the day," or to have light in him. Hence, then, it must appear clearly to every serious and thinking mind, what is signified, or meant by "the day-spring from on high;" for as "day" signifies a state of goodness or truth, or of love and wisdom from the Lord, so "the day-spring from on high" must signify the Lord himself, who is the "spring," or fountain of "day," that is, the source of all goodness and truth, all love and wisdom; and therefore, justly, and emphatically called, "The Day-Spring from on High." That there is, and can be, only one source, one fountain, one "day-spring from on high," or one "father of light" must be acknowledged by every one, who believes the sacred scriptures, or word of the Lord. It is as certain, therefore, as truth itself, that this "day-spring from on high" was no other, than that divine person, who is foretold by the evangelical prophet Isaiah, and described by him, as being "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;" The Incarnate, or Manifested Jehovah Jesus, the Everlasting Creator, Redeemer, Regenerator, and Saviour of all flesh. Such strong, and forcible language as this, beloved, may appear too positive to those, who have been led to suppose, that there are more Gods, than One, or that there are Three distinct, and separate persons in the Godhead. Such persons, however, would do well impartially to weigh, and consider the fallacy and danger of believing, and acknowledging any other God, than One, the Lord God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, who himself assured Philip of old, that he was "The Father," when he said, "He, that hath seen me, hath seen the Father;" who is called by St. Matthew, "Immanuel, God with us;" who is described by St. John

St. John as "The Word, that became Flesh, and dwelt amongst us;" and is expressly called by St. Paul, "God manifest in the flesh." Such was the Redeemer Jesus Christ, the Lord of Hosts, who was Redeemer in time, and Creator from eternity; who called himself, throughout the old Testament, by the mouth of his Prophets, "The Redeemer, The Saviour, the Lord of Hosts;" as where it is written by Isaiah. "Am not I Jehovah? And there is no God else beside me; a just God, and a Saviour; there is not beside me:" Again, "I am Jehovah, and beside me, there is no Saviour:" Again, "Thus saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am Jehovah, thy God:" Again, in the Psalms, "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth:" And again in Isaiah, "The Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: He shall be called the God of the whole earth."

We have now considered what is meant by "day-spring from on high;" let us then further enquire how he visited us.

We have just now endeavoured to shew that there is only one God, that there is only one Redeemer and Saviour; and that the Jehovah of the Old Testament was the Lord Jesus Christ of the new. Doubtless, some scruples may arise in the minds of some, how, and why God should appear in our nature, and in our flesh; and how he could thus visit us? They may distress themselves, by enquiring, why could not God, by an immediate act of mercy, have restored fallen man to his original purity? Why did he permit the Jews to treat him with

with such contempt? And why did he undergo all that process of affliction, and suffering, when he was himself the very God of heaven and of earth?

That God should appear to, and dwell with men, was uniformly foretold by the prophets; that he should be afflicted, a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." The reason of his not delivering man from his fallen state, by an immediate act of mercy, and restoring him to his original purity, was because he had made him free, and had given to him a power of choosing, or of refusing, eternal life; and he underwent all that process of affliction and suffering, that he might resist and overcome the attacks, and assaults of the infernal spirits, of sin, death, and hell, which were thus, by his assuming our nature, capable of assaulting him, but, otherwise, as the eternal father, in his inmost essence, would flee before him.

God from the beginning had revealed himself to man by his spirit and his word. Man, however, had gradually, and in successive periods of the church, lost all understanding with respect to the Lord, and his kingdom, whereby the powers of darkness had entered into, and ruled over him, in-somuch that when the Lord appeared amongst men; some, we read, "were possessed with unclean spirits, others tormented with Devils;" and all ignorant of their lost estate, and condition, having rendered his word unintelligible, as he himself tells us, by "their own traditions," by evils of life, and falses of doctrine.

Such was the world, when the Lord appeared among men, or, as my text expresses it, "visited us."

How,

How, then, could he visit us, but as "divine truth;" to open anew our understandings to the reception of his truth, and our hearts to the reception of his love; that we might thus be again restored to the enjoyment of his blessedness, and have conjunction with him. He himself tells us, that "he is the way, the truth, and the life," and informed Pilate, when accused before him, "that for this cause, he came into the world, that he might bear witness of the truth." He calls himself in the Revelations, "The Alpha, and Omega, The Beginning, and the End, The First, and the Last;" and consequently, as being the fountain of truth, or truth itself, in its highest sense, so he must be truth in its ultimate or lowest sense, in his revealed will, the sacred scriptures, and therefore, justly, and properly called "The Word." It was in this humble, yet blessed form, that he made himself approachable, and useful, a Regenerator, a Redeemer, and a Saviour to his poorest creatures, who were overwhelmed in misery, and sin; because, without such humiliation, or descending to the lowest possible means of usefulness, his creatures might have still remained incapable of being regenerated and redeemed. It is by laying a foundation, that we are enabled to finish our work; it is by humiliation, or self-abasement, that we can be exalted in true, and substantial bliss; and it was by becoming truth in its lowest state, that the Lord made himself approachable by man in his highest, and most exalted wisdom.

Having now endeavoured to shew, what is meant by "Day-spring from on High," and what by "visiting us," let us proceed,

Secondly,

Secondly, to enquire, for what purpose "The day-spring from on high hath visited us;" and what need we had of such visitation.

The blessed purpose for which "the day-spring from on high visited us," was "to give light to them, that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death."

Light, we are well convinced, is intended to benefit and assist those, who are in a state of darkness; for when light approacheth, the darkness is driven away and retireth, like the morning vapor before the rising sun. In this sense, therefore, the "day-spring from on high," or divine truth, which is "The Word," was wonderfully adapted to the restoration and recovery of that heavenly love, and wisdom, which was lost; and beautifully harmonizes with those words of the Psalmist, where he says, "Thy word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths;" and again, "When thy word goeth forth, it giveth light, and understanding unto the simple."

Deaf, and dumb, and dark and blind was mankind, when the Lord appeared among them; for, "though they had eyes, they saw not" the beauty of his rising; and though "they had ears, they heard not" the "glad tidings" of redeeming love and mercy. This deplorable state is fitly represented by the Evangelist, as being "The shadow of death;" inasmuch as a state of ignorance, with respect to divine things, must necessarily withhold every progress, and advancement of love, and goodness, and keep the soul, which is thus fettered, upon the very brink of ruin,

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and destruction. For ever adored, however, be the divine goodness, which hath mercifully directed all things, according to the unerring rule of his own eternal order, gradually, and as he is "able to bear it," preparing man for the full enjoyment of his own pure, and unsullied "peace."

The words of my text acquaint us, that "The day-spring from on high visited us," not only "to give light to them, that sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death," but also "to guide our feet into the way of peace." The different operations of the two principles in man, the will and the understanding, together with their necessary, and indispensable union, in order to make man happy, are here beautifully laid down. "Peace" always has reference to the will, and is the child and offspring of pure, heavenly love towards the Lord and our neighbour. No "peace" can be enjoyed, but as it springs from, and is born of love; and no love can be genuine, which has not truth as its medium; inasmuch as goodness itself would cease to be such, unless cherished by truth. Truth, or "light," which is food for the understanding, may fitly be compared to the ground-work, or foundation of a building; which is first as to beginning, but last as to end; but love, though last in beginning, is first as to end; it being produced from truth, as the sure means of ensuring "peace." Thus we see, how necessary it is, that a man should "walk in the light," that is, in truth; how necessary it is, that "the day-spring from on high should visit" him, before he can have any deliverance from his darkness, or his feet be "guided into the way of peace."

To

To conclude. Having considered the subject, as it relates to man in general, let us not forget to apply it, each of us, to ourselves in particular. Let us, each of us, for ourselves, ask ourselves, whether "The day-spring from on high hath visited us;" whether we are led by that "Wisdom, which cometh from above;" whether we are guided by that "Truth," which the Lord God the Redeemer, and Saviour, Jesus Christ, declares himself to be; and, in consequence thereof, whether we are delivered from "darkness, and the shadow of death," and guided into the "way of peace?" For we may rest assured, that, unless we are in the truth of wisdom, we can never enjoy the good of love; that without a spiritual understanding, we cannot have an heavenly will; that, without an heavenly will, we can have no "peace;" and, that without "peace," we can have no salvation.---- May we all seriously weigh these awful truths? May we all eagerly cultivate and improve our spiritual capacities; that truth and goodness, love and wisdom may grow up in us; that the pure and spotless babe of Bethlehem may be born in our hearts; that thus "The wolf and the lamb may dwell together; the leopard lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child lead them; that the cow, and bear may feed; their young ones lie down together; the lion eat straw, like the ox; the sucking child play on the hole of the asp; and the weaned child put his hand upon the cockatrice den."

And O Holy, and Merciful Jehovah Jesus, our Incarnate God and Redeemer, let thy unceasing goodness to us-ward inspire us with the love of thy truth and light, that we may go on from day to day,

from state to state, till we are enabled, by happy experience, and a blessed inward sensibility to cry out, in the language of the Prophet, " Lo ! this is our God ; we have waited for him ; and he will save us : this is the Lord ; we have waited for him ; we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation ;" or in the words of my text, " The day-spring from on high hath visited us ; hath given light to us, who sat in darkness, and the shadow of death, and hath guided our feet into the way of peace."---
Amen !

SERMON

SERMON XII.

ST. JOHN, Chap. vi. Ver. 44.

"NO MAN CAN COME TO ME, EXCEPT THE FATHER,
WHICH HATH SENT ME, DRAW HIM."

IF we look into the sacred scriptures, or holy word of the Lord, we shall find many things therein, according to the language of St. Paul, "hard to be understood," and which appear to contradict other passages equally interesting, and equally important. Dark, indeed, and obscured as our understandings are by sin, by an evil heart, and an evil life, we can only see objects of a divine nature in proportion to the clearness of our spiritual vision; and as that, it is much to be feared, is dim, and gloomy, and weak and contracted, no wonder, that we see things in an imperfect and confused state; no wonder that we imagine contradictions multiply upon contradictions; and too often alas! call in question the wisdom of the Lord's divine providence, who appeareth to have veiled and concealed his will, his word, his truth, and life in too deep, and mysterious explanations. Such, it must be acknowledged, is the language and opinion of many at the present day; of such only, however, as have no true desire to be "taught of the Lord," and the Lord alone, but are
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willing to prove spiritual truths, and eternal blessedness by the fallacious standard of carnal reasonings, and human conclusions. The words of the Lord, to our comfort, are not barely letters. They are not only for the use of the bodily life and natural mind—but they are also “spirit and life,” in mercy, clothed as with a body, accommodated to our weak capacities, and capable of being gradually opened and unveiled to our spiritual eye, in proportion as we forsake the things of this world and the flesh, and approach to a nearer state of heavenly-mindedness, and a more intimate communication, and conjunction with the God and Father of all mercies.

Amongst many passages of the holy word of truth, which have often been quoted to support the most uncharitable, and most unchristian opinions, and consequently have been much misapplied, and misunderstood, the words of my text have borne no inconsiderable a part; where it is written, “No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.”

Let us, however, through the divine blessing, endeavour to explain them in their true sense and meaning, and in such a manner, as may tend to our edification and regeneration here, and our comfort and blessedness hereafter, whilst we consider,

First, What is the general, yet false, idea of the words of my text, and whence such false idea originates.

Secondly, What dreadful consequences arise from such conclusion.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, What is the true meaning thereof, and how God draweth all men unto him.

And lastly point out the comfort and satisfaction arising from so amiable a prospect of the unbounded love, mercy and goodness of the Manifested Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ.

First, then, What is the general, yet false, idea of the words of my text, and whence such false idea originates.

The generally received opinion of mankind is, that there are more Gods than one, that there is one God, who is called "The Father," another God who is called "The Son," and another who is called "The Holy Ghost," each of which separately and distinctly is God. It is further believed, that the nature, and power, and operation of each of these is different. --God the Father, having all power, and at the same time angry and revengeful; God the Son, as inferior, yet full of mercy and love: and God the Holy Ghost, as acting according to the pleasure and direction of the other. Hence ariseth the idea, that no one can come to Jesus Christ, and be saved by him, unless God the Father is willing and laboureth to draw him. Such opinions as these, however, are not founded upon scripture, neither can they be confirmed by the holy word of truth. It is indeed true, that mention is made in scripture of three, not however as three separate and distinct Gods, but as separate powers of the same Blessed God and Redeemer, who is called Father as to his Divinity, the Son as to his Humanity, and the Holy Ghost as to his Operation, or Divine Working.

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From such an unscriptural explanation as that above given, the words of my text have been wrested to favor predestination and election; and have been held out to shew man, that all his attempts to come to Jesus Christ, and consequently to the enjoyment of eternal life are vain, without the arbitrary compulsion, and violent drawing of the Father. God, however, beloved, never forceth, never obligeth, never compelleth any one---He hath in mercy made us free creatures---he hath set before us blessing and cursing, life and death, heaven and hell, ---and hath directed us to choose for ourselves, informing us at the same time that we must be accountable for our own conduct and actions. Such we find was the declaration of Moses to the children of Israel of old, when he said, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore chuse life, that both thou and thy seed may live, that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him, (for he is thy life, and the length of thy days) that thou mayest dwell in the land, which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." And again, "See, I have set before thee, this day, life and good, death and evil: in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandment, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land, whither thou goest to possess it. But, if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you, this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that

that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan, to go to possess it."---This doth not shew us, that there is any respect of persons with God, but that "every one, that worketh righteousness is accepted of him." But let us now,

Secondly, Enquire into the dreadful consequences arising from such a false and delusive opinion.

When man considereth, that he is but dust and ashes, that he hath no power, but what is of, and from God, he is naturally led to fear to reverence and adore so great and powerful a God. Such however is not the impression, which the words of my text have, upon those, who would impute injustice to the Lord, who in the pursuit and practice of evil, say, "The Lord doth not draw them;" he hath given them no power to help themselves, they are nothing but mere evil, and they can do and act no otherwise, until the Lord is pleased to change their hearts. Thus do they proceed from sin to sin, charging God with their evil deeds and impieties, because he hath not drawn them to himself, contrary to their own wills.

But there is a still more dreadful consequence arising from such unholy and unhallowed views. In the first dawns of conviction upon the wounded, and grieved spirit, the same divine light, which is intended to shew it a way for escaping, points out to it also its miserable and deplorable state.---Painful, awful, and agonizing indeed is such a condi-

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tion---Diffident, and desponding, it dares scarce lift its eyes, or strive to penetrate the darksome gloom. ---Often will it perplex itself with unnecessary sorrows---Often will it form unreal evils---Wretched man! it will exclaim---What hope of mercy is held up for me! I cannot approach my Redeemer, unless the Father draw me---I feel, however, no such drawings---I am sunk in sin---I am overwhelmed with misery, and am bound with the fetters of death---What must I do then! I am not an heir of glory! I have no title to the kingdom of heaven! God hath reserved such blessings for those only, whom he hath ordained to be happy with him hereafter. Under such afflictions the soul is often weak, in such temptations it is often tried; and when overpowered by such arguments as those above-mentioned, often drawn away from looking after the things of heaven, and God; and returning to the pursuit of worldly objects and delights, seeketh to eradicate every conviction of the divine mercy, and sink itself lower than it ever was before. Happy, in some measure, would it be if the malady went no further. But, alas! have not such opinions led the weak and distressed in spirit to suicide, to self-murder! Have not many confirmed themselves in the belief, that God would not draw them, and consequently, that they could not be saved, and then rushed uncalled into a fearful eternity! If such be the consequences of an improper understanding of the holy word of truth, may we all labour to avoid such diabolical explanations of that gospel, which proclaimeth nothing but peace, glad tidings and rest, and may we all look to the Lord, and the Lord alone, whilst we endeavour to shew,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, What is the true meaning thereof, and how God draweth all men to Jesus Christ.

If we read the sacred scriptures with spiritual desires, we shall be enabled to see, that the word of the Lord is spirit and life. Now there is only one God, and one Lord, the Creator, the Redeemer, and Regenerator of all flesh, and Jesus Christ often declareth himself to be that one Lord, as when he saith, "I and the Father, are one"----"He, that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." Now if these words be true, the words of my text appear mysterious, and hard to be understood, because our Lord saith, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which sent me, draw him." Did the Father, therefore, send himself? This appeareth strange; yet so the scriptures assure us. When the Jews were admiring our Lord's miracles, he told them, that he did not do the works, but the Father, which dwelt in him, he did the works. From this plain and obvious passage, every serious mind may see, how the Father and Son, like soul and body, form one Christ, or Redeemer, and that these are not two, but one---according to that part of the creed of St. Athanasius, when he saith, "For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ;" and again, "altho' he be God and Man, he is not two, but one Christ."---The Lord we know calleth himself "The Way, The Truth, and the Life," and then saith, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." If the Father, therefore, be divine love, or the soul; and the Son divine truth, or the body, we may easily see, how each uniteth with each, and how essentially necessary it is, that divine love should draw man to the knowledge of divine truth. But in order to make

this as plain as possible, let us consider the following comparison.---Man, we know, is composed of soul and body, which we will call, for the sake of illustration, the Father and the Son. Now nothing can have conjunction with that body, unless the soul willeth, desireth, loveth and consequently draweth it thereunto; because all freedom and consequently all power is from the will, or interior of man. Just so it is with respect to the words of my text, where it is written, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which sent me, draw him;"---that is, man cannot know, and consequently come unto me as the Redeemer and Saviour, but in and by, a spirit of divine love, which is truly and properly, the Father, or the beginning and introduction of every thing, that is heavenly in the heart and soul of man, according to these words, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

Should what hath been said not prove sufficiently evident, let us consider what our Lord himself hath said in another place, as having himself the power of drawing mankind unto him, where it is written, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Surely the Redeemer was not mistaken. Doubtless he was able to fulfil his promise. He doth not say, "The Father will draw all men, but I will draw all men unto me;"---so that he is the alone God of heaven and of earth, being "The Father," or divine love, which is unapproachable, but through the medium of the Son, or divine truth; and being the Son, or divine truth, by which man is brought to the full enjoyment and possession of divine love, which is the Father. "God is love," saith St. John. Jesus Christ manifested every kind and degree of love.

love. He gave sight to the blind, feet to the lame, speech to the dumb, comfort to the afflicted, life to the dead. Is not this love? Is not this the goodness of God? If we look back upon our own lives from childhood to the present hour, we shall see, how he hath all along been drawing us, and endeavouring to draw us to himself. When we were in a state of helplessness and need in infancy, who supported us? Did not divine love? And for what purpose? To draw us unto himself? When afflictions, and sorrows, and distresses and griefs have come upon us, what hath delivered us from their power? Hath not divine love, which hath thus endeavoured to draw us to the Son, or divine truth, that is, to read, to examine, the holy word of the Lord, to look therein for his blessed will, to find the word of the Lord to be a lamp to our feet, and a light unto our paths, which would if duly observed, bring us back to the Father, or a spirit of an holy love, a divine faith, a firm trust and confidence in an all-wise providence, which by every visitation, and every dispensation, whether of sickness, or of health, whether of adversity, or prosperity, whether of sorrow, or of joy, is labouring to draw us still nearer to our everlasting rest. Mankind, alas! unhappily expect and suppose, that they must be drawn some other way, than that of the Lord's ordinary and daily providence. They want something of the marvellous---they want something uncommon---they want some extraordinary operations! They cannot see, or they will not see, how the divine administration is carried on by an impartial God, who desireth not the death of any, but seeketh and striveth in all things, consistent with man's freedom, to draw him unto himself. Such, however, will never find their wishes gratified,
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or their expectations realized, but to their everlasting confusion and sorrow will experience, unless they turn unto the Lord, that they have pursued a shadow, but lost the substance, and deluded and destroyed their own souls.

But let us now, Lastly, consider the comfort and satisfaction arising from so amiable a prospect of the unbounded love, mercy and goodness of the Manifested Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ.

When we behold the Lord Jesus Christ in the endearing character of Father and Son; when we consider him not only as Truth itself, but also as Love itself, what idea can be more comfortable, what prospect so pleasing, and what hope so encouraging. The ways of his divine providence are indeed to us, and by us, unsearchable! But when we consider every circumstance, and every occurrence of life, as means used by him in mercy to bring us to himself; when we behold him in the stormy wind, and the mild zephyr; when we behold him in troubles and afflictions; when we behold him in the order of every day's progress as endeavouring to awaken in us a sense of gratitude, of love, and duty; when we consider, that not a single day passeth, without reading a useful lesson of heavenly information, who can deny, that God is love, and that he wisheth us to draw us to his truth?

To conclude. May we all, beloved, seriously examine our own hearts, and our own lives. Let us not vainly say, we have no power, the Lord doth not draw us, we have no longing or desire for happiness,

piness, and therefore our exertions are vain; but look at the occurrences of every day and every hour! Who supported you the last week? Did not God? Who hath preserved you this day? Hath not God? For what purpose? To shew you his goodness, to fill your hearts with gratitude, thanksgiving and praise; to shew you, that the Father, that is, that love alone can draw you to the pursuit and desire of truth, which alone can make us happy. Whenever you read the sacred scripture, or holy word of truth, which is in the lowest sense here meant by the Son, who calleth himself "The Truth," be assured that you are drawn by the Father, so long as you read them with a desire, and love to practise the commandments there enjoined---but be also assured, that they will be only a "sealed book and a dead letter" to you, whilst you read them without a desire and study to become better men, more humble, and consequently more like the Lord. We acknowledge the scriptures to be the blessed word of holy truth from the Lord---we acknowledge that they were in mercy given for our instruction, and edification in a spiritual and divine life---we acknowledge all this, but yet how are we to be, or how can we be better, unless we love and consequently obey its sacred injunctions? Let us no longer deceive ourselves in so important a matter. Remember that knowing our duty, without loving and fulfilling it, will only increase our condemnation. Remember he is the best churchman, who hath the living power, and nature of the Lord's true church, that is, of love, faith and obedience in his heart and life. Remember he is the best man, who hath most endeavoured to fulfil the law of heavenly charity; and that he only is a
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christian (though many improperly assume that name) who is like Christ—who receiveth all his power from him; using all those means, which he affordeth, and all that power, which he giveth, to further, through the divine blessing upon his labor, his own advancement in a spiritual and heavenly life! May we all then, immediately endeavour to become such christians! May “we all honour the Son as we honor the Father, because he that honoreth the Son, honoreth the Father,” and Our Lord saith “I and the Father are one.” May we all love the truth, and then “the truth will make us free;” thus shall we be daily drawn unto the Son by the Father, that is unto the interior knowledge and wisdom of divine truth by the love of that truth; and at last experience, that Jesus is the alone God, Redeemer, and Saviour, who alone is able to “raise us up at the last day,”—for he himself hath said in the latter part of the verse, “And I will raise him up at the last day.”

SERMON

S E R M O N XIII.

ST. JOHN, Chap. vi. Ver. 53.

" THEN JESUS SAID UNTO THEM, VERILY, VERILY, I SAY UNTO YOU, EXCEPT YE EAT THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN, AND DRINK HIS BLOOD, YE HAVE NO LIFE IN YOU."

THE one only end, and design of Our Lord's coming in the flesh was, to restore fallen mankind from their state of ignorance, and evil, to a life of wisdom, goodness, and love, by withstanding, overcoming, and finally subduing, in his own person, the powers of darkness, death, and hell, and thus making salvation possible for them, by enabling them " to overcome, even also as he had overcome." His every instruction was that of wisdom; his every exercise that of charity; and his every labour that of love. Amongst the many instances of goodness, mentioned in the holy word, none appears more interesting, or profitable for edification, than that, which had produced the declaration in my text. He had fed " five thousand, with five barley loaves, and two small fishes," an emblem of that divine love, whose stores can never be exhausted. After having thus bountifully supplied their wants, he departed to Capernaum, whither the multitude followed him.

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He tells them, " they did not follow him, because they saw his miracles," not from an ardent desire of being delivered from their spiritual maladies, but " because they had eaten of his loaves, and were filled ;" and with all possible tenderness exhorts them to " labour, not for the meat, that perisheth, but for that meat, which endureth unto everlasting life." He further acquaints them, after a variety of other useful information, that " He is the bread of life, which came down from heaven," that " if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever," and that " the bread, which he will give, is his flesh, which he will give for the life of the world;" and then adds to the " Jews, who strove amongst themselves, saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat? Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

The subject is of great importance ; let us, therefore, consider,

First, What is meant by " eating the flesh of the son of man ;"

Secondly, What is meant by " drinking his blood ;"

Thirdly, Shew how indispensably necessary it is for us to " eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, that we may have life in us;" not only in the outward sacrament of the Lord's supper, but every day, and every moment of our lives.

First, then, Let us consider, What is meant by " eating the flesh of the son of man."

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We are all of us sufficiently sensible, how necessary natural food, and natural nourishment is for the support, nourishment, and growth of the natural life, and body. We are further sensible, that this food, and nourishment must be constantly given, and as constantly applied, otherwise the powers of the body would decay, and man, as to his natural life, would be no longer man. When the Lord, therefore, says, that we "must eat his flesh, and drink his blood; or we can have no life in us," it must appear evidently to us, that spiritual death, or the death of the soul, as to all heavenly comforts, and blessings, must be the sure consequence of not "eating his flesh, and drinking his blood."

That by "flesh" here mentioned is not meant natural "flesh," nor by "blood" natural "blood;" but something spiritual, heavenly, and divine, must be clear to every considerate person, whilst he reads these words of St. John in the Revelations, "Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the Great God, that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them, that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great:" and again in Ezekiel, "Gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice, that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood; ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth; and ye shall eat fat, till ye be full, and drink blood, till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice, which I have sacrificed for you; thus shall ye be filled at my table with horses,

and chariots, with mighty men, and all men of war, and I will set my glory among the heathen." Who cannot hence discern, that the Lord could never feed those, who were thus invited, with those things, according to the outward letter, with "flesh, and blood, with horses, and chariots;" but with something heavenly and divine, to which they correspond?

By "flesh, or bread," in the sacred scriptures, is signified divine good, which is given by the Lord to man for spiritual, and eternal food, according to these words, where it is written, "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word, that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live:" And again, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost."

To "eat the flesh of Christ," therefore, signifies to appropriate, or make his divine good, or his divine love our own, by loving what is good, by bringing every affection, principle, and desire, to a strict conformity to his blessed will; thus making the "bread of life," the pure love of the Lord, our only nourishment, and support, and growing up into heavenly forms of angelic beauty, love, and peace.

We find, however, that it is not sufficient to "eat the flesh of the son of man," in order to our being fed with all the "fullness of God;" but we must likewise "drink his blood," or else "we can have no life in us." In this respect we further behold the goodness of the Lord, who hath not only provided spiritual meat, but likewise spiritual drink
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for us; inasmuch as without such a supply, we should still have been unable to attain everlasting life; let us, therefore, enquire,

Secondly, What is meant by "drinking his blood."

With respect to the body, or bodily life we know, that meat alone, or drink alone, cannot support it, but proper quantities of each. Just so it is with respect to man's spiritual life, which requires a proper quantity of the Lord's "blood," as well as "flesh," to support, and feed it.

By "blood, and wine," in the sacred scriptures, is signified divine truth, which is given by the Lord to man for spiritual, and eternal food, according to those words, where it is written, "And Jesus took the cup, and gave it to them, saying, This is my blood of the new covenant." By the blood of the new covenant is meant the Word, which is called covenant, and testament, consequently the divine truth, which it contains.

To "drink the blood" of Christ, therefore, signifies, to appropriate, or make his divine truth, or divine wisdom our own, by understanding what is true, by looking up to the Lord for illumination, inasmuch as he declares himself to be the "The light of the world," and "he, that followeth him, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Let us now, Thirdly, proceed to shew, how indispensably necessary it is for us to "eat the flesh
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of the son of man, and to drink his blood, that we may have life in us," not only in the outward sacrament of the Lord's supper, but every day, and every moment of our lives.

God, we are informed, at first made man pure, upright, and happy; and, in this state, he may truly be said to have enjoyed life, inasmuch as he enjoyed the very constituents of life---the divine love, and the divine truth of the Lord. When he departed from this state of purity, uprightness, and happiness, he may truly be said to have lost that life, inasmuch as he was an utter stranger to that love and truth, by which, and in which, alone he could live. For ever adored, however, be the divine goodness, and mercy of the Lord, who hath not left men without the means of regaining that life, which was lost, but hath informed us how it may be regained, that is, "by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood."

We have already seen, what is meant by "flesh and blood," and what by "eating, and drinking" thereof; let us now endeavour to shew, how "eating the Lord's flesh, and drinking his blood" produceth life.

As the Lord alone is life itself, and alone hath life in himself, so every thing, which proceedeth from him, imparteth of that life to those who are willing to receive it. Now the Lord is love itself, and wisdom itself, or goodness itself, and truth itself, and whoever admitteth this love and wisdom, or this goodness and truth, admitteth life, inasmuch as these constitute eternal life. In order that man may receive the benefits of these, the Lord hath provided
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man with a will for the reception of his love, and an understanding for the reception of his truth: — With his will, therefore, he eats, or feeds upon the divine love of the Lord; and with his understanding he drinks his divine truth. It is according to this true, and scriptural interpretation, that love is attributed to the will, and faith, or truth to the understanding, where it is written, “Jesus said, I am the bread of life; he, that cometh to me, shall never hunger, and he, that believeth on me, shall never thirst.” Neither love, nor faith, however, will avail any thing, except they proceed from, and are intimately united with the Lord; for “eating and drinking” in another sense would be unprofitable; “except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” It is by means of love and truth thus united with the Lord, and proceeding from him, that the Lord can bless man, and man can have conjunction with the Lord; and it is by means of this heavenly Trinity, viz. the Lord, his divine goodness and truth, that life is given, and preserved.

Many, it is to be lamented, at the present day, have no higher conceptions, no clearer ideas of this heavenly and sublime truth, than the Jews of Old, and are ready to exclaim with them, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Blind to the contemplation of divine truth, and lost, unhappily lost, to the love of eternal goodness, they disbelieve, what they cannot naturally comprehend, and hate the exercise of that piety, which would debar them the enjoyment of their earthly affections, and worldly pursuits. To “eat the flesh of the son of man, and to drink his blood,” appears to such to be the privilege, and

and business of those only, who frequent and approach the Lord's table. They would willingly persuade themselves, that they will at some future period, when they are better prepared for it, "eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood;" and thus seek, and obtain everlasting life thereby. To such, however, I would willingly address myself, and put them in remembrance, that they are deluding themselves, inasmuch as it is every man's duty and interest always to "eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood," otherwise "he can have no life in him." Our blessed Lord, when he spake these words, does not appear to have had the sacrament in view in any measure; he could not, therefore, deliver it as a requisite observance to them only, but a general obligation to all, who heard him, to come out of the ignorance, and evil, in which they were overwhelmed, into his marvellous truth and love.

To those, who are willing to apply these words of my text to the celebration of the Holy Supper, I would with all possible earnestness exhort them, always to keep it in remembrance, that by "the body of the Lord, or by the bread," is signified Divine Love, and by "the blood of the Lord, or by the wine," is signified divine truth. When they approach the Lord's table, let them ask themselves these, or such important questions, as these: What idea have I of this great and awful sacrament? Do I properly understand its design, its blessedness, and its power? Do I feel my heart, my will, and my affections inflamed with divine love? If not, I have no business here; inasmuch as I shall defile such pure sacrifices with

with an unhallowed, and unholy heart. Do I feel my understanding enlightened by the divine truth of the Lord, and that "wisdom, which cometh from above?" If not, how unworthy am I to approach thus unto the Lord? How dreadful is it for me, who am in utter darkness with respect to the Lord, and the nature of his eternal kingdom, to drink the emblem of that divine light, and illumination, which proceedeth from the Lord? If men would accustom themselves to such enquiries as these, they would soon be enabled to part with all those gross conceptions, which they have hitherto entertained of this indispensable duty; they would soon discover the reasonableness of "feeding daily upon the Lord's body and blood," that is, his divine love and truth; and experience the blessedness of his word, where it is written, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life;" and again, "He, that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

I am fully sensible, how contrary such an explanation of my text is to those, which you have been accustomed to hear. It is, however, the simple declaration of scripture, without any forced explanation, or any deviation whatever. You have hitherto been led to suppose, that by body was meant the outward body, which hung upon the cross, and by blood, the outward blood, which was shed upon Calvary, and that by this outward process of suffering your sins were pardoned, without considering what was the true spiritual signification thereof. Every part of our Lord's sufferings represented the state of the Jewish Church, who were in possession of "The Word, or holy Scriptures." By their cru-

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cifying him was signified the destruction, and profanation of "The Word, or sacred Scriptures," because he was "THE WORD;" by piercing his side was signified that they had totally extinguished all the truth, and all the good of the Word; and by his rising again was signified his glorification, or the union of the humanity with the divinity of the Father.

Hence we may see the absurdity of supposing, that God the Father, full of wrath and anger, separated his creatures from him, and sentenced them to eternal death; but that the Son, out of mercy, was pleased to offer himself to be scourged by the Jews, to be spit upon, and lastly, to be crucified, that he might appease the Father's wrath; hence, I say, we may see the absurdity of such a supposition, if we but consider, how impossible it is for God, who is Love itself, and goodness itself, to be full of anger, malice, wrath, and revenge.

Whenever, in future, we think of the crucifixion, let us not imagine that the sensibility of nature alone is necessary to be excited; let us not barely picture to our imagination the outward sufferings, but let us consider, what is signified thereby. Let us ask our own hearts, whether we, like the Jews of old, are ignorant of, or have profaned his holy word; and let a fair investigation shew us the necessity of sincere and true repentance, that we may thereby be enabled to "eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood," that is, be fed, nourished, and strengthened by his love, and truth in our wills, and understandings, and thus attain "everlasting life."

To

To conclude. When Our Lord, a little while before his crucifixion, was celebrating the passover, "He took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to them, saying, take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you. Likewise he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for you:" As if he had said, "We are now celebrating this supper, as the conclusion of the Jewish, and the beginning of the Christian Passover. The process of my suffering, and temptation is nearly finished; and I must soon cease to comfort, and encourage you with my words: But be not discouraged; in these emblems of my love, and truth, ye will be enabled to think of, and approach unto me. What! though I cannot still afford you my bodily presence, though ye cannot behold me with your natural eyes, yet I will still be with you. "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come again to you; I will lead you into all truth;" and ye shall then know many things, which ye cannot now bear; and fully experience those sayings of mine, "He, that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Let this be deeply engraven upon the tablet of your hearts, inasmuch as it is the last time we can thus outwardly celebrate this passover together; but my love, and my truth, if ye abide therein, shall never fail, but remain with you for ever and ever."

Such, we may imagine, was the blessed import of his last exhortation on this subject to his disciples; and such is his constant language of love to us, if we could but view him, as he is, a God of infinite mercy,

cy, and goodness, whose compassion is boundless, and whose love and truth fail not. How often hath his bountiful providence endeavoured to awaken us to a sense of gratitude? How often hath his protecting arm guarded us from the power of the destroyer? Is not this love unutterable? Is not this love divine? And all this is done, to induce us to "eat his flesh, and drink his blood," that we may be "in him, and he in us," to our unspeakable happiness, and eternal good. Let us then not refuse for a single moment, but immediately apply to him for this heavenly food; for unless we "eat his flesh, and drink his blood," unless we are filled with his redeeming love, and truth, "we have no life in us;" and if no life, consequently no happiness, and therefore, no salvation; but if we thus approach unto, and live in him, and by him, we shall be holy, as he is holy, pure, as he is pure, and reign with him to all eternity.

SERMON

S E R M O N XIV.

ST. JAMES, Chap. ii. Part of Ver. 26.

"THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD."

TO contemplate the miseries of human life, and to behold that suffering state of affliction, to which the natural man and the natural mind is exposed, when separate from God, would, one would think, be of itself sufficient, to awaken the listless and unthinking from that lethargic state of indifference, in which they are enveloped. But, alas! how seemingly useless are all the various dispensations of the divine providence, which so plainly speak the language of truth; which, though oral testimony should be disbelieved; though Revelation itself should be called in question; yet incontrovertibly tell man, that his sorrows will never be mitigated, his inquietude relieved, nor his burden removed, till the body is quickened by the spirit, and the things of eternity are seen, and felt, and acknowledged, and manifested in the things, which are outward, natural, and corporeal. The principal reason of this ignorance of God, and a want of that information, which is necessary to lead him to the blessed source of unerring truth, is, that men have introduced their own idle conceits in the place of the
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pure word of the Lord, have substituted the form, for the life, the body for the spirit, and have idolized unenlightened reason instead of worshipping the true God.

The gross conceptions of carnal-minded men, and the almost universal denial of a spiritual beauty, order, harmony, and life eternal, veiled in the letter of scripture, as the soul within the body, loudly call for a serious, and strict investigation. I cannot but think myself not only excusable, but even called upon, as your servant, and as accountable to an higher, than any earthly tribunal, fully to lay open to you the necessity of such a spiritual understanding of the word of the Lord, and such a spiritual obedience to, and observance of, the divine commandments, as will enable us to have right apprehensions of the divine providence, goodness, and mercy, and from such apprehension be led to love, reverence, and adore that God, who must be worshipped, not by the body only, for "the body without the spirit is dead," but "in spirit and in truth, for the father seeketh such to worship him."

The words of my text are abundantly full, and explicit on this head, containing both a positive declaration of the misery attendant upon a separation of body and spirit, "for the body without the spirit is dead;" and also shewing how a regular union of the two natures and principles produceth life eternal.

Let us, therefore, endeavour to consider carefully,

First, What is meant by "The Body;"

Secondly, What is meant by "The Spirit ;

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Endeavour to shew, how a separation of the two principles produceth death, for "the body without the spirit is dead;"

And lastly, Point out the necessity of uniting in one holy marriage, and inseparable bond, the body and the spirit, which will be productive of an heavenly birth, and offspring, and finally bring us to everlasting blessedness and glory.

First, then, let us consider, What is meant by "Body."

When man findeth and readeth in the holy word these, or such like words as these, he is apt to consider them only as relating to the outward body of flesh and blood, which is short-lived, and perishing, and thus loseth all the benefit and usefulness intended to be derived therefrom. By body, however, be it well observed, something more important is signified than the mere earthly, corporeal, body of flesh and blood; and the spiritually enlightened mind, in consequence of an interior discernment herein, is led to acknowledge, not only by his words, but also by his practice, its blessed and salutary import.

When the natural man heareth, or speaketh of the body, he thinketh only of that gross material substance, which he enjoys in common with the beasts that perish: When he heareth, or speaketh of the death of the body, he thinketh only of its separation from that immortal part, which can never die, or cease to exist: When he heareth or speaketh of the afflictions of the body, he thinketh only of that sense of bodily pain, which ariseth, and proceedeth from the impure disorder of various confused, and vitiated

vitiated properties, in his material form. Hence he clearly demonstrates by the strongest evidence, the evidence of his own ignorance of himself, how liable he must be to the assaults of misery, sin, and death; and how totally unfit he is, in such a state, to prepare for a work so great, a labor so necessary and important, as that of self-examination, "repentance from dead works," and a life of holy converse and communion with the God and Father of all Spirits.

By "body," however, when mentioned in scripture, something further is signified than the material and animal body. I have often endeavoured to shew you that man is endued with two natures superior to that of the merely animal life, and these are, the natural, or rational mind, which is calculated to guide him through life, in subordination to the spiritual mind, and the spiritual mind, which is calculated to enable him to hold converse with his God and Redeemer, and thus to qualify, to fit and prepare him for the enjoyment of his eternal kingdom of celestial life and love. By the "body," therefore, here mentioned in my text, is meant the natural or rational will, the natural or rational love, and consequently the natural or rational mind, which is truly the "body," and which, when the fleshly covering is dissolved and perished, never to rise again, will remain the same immortal body in possession of eternal blessedness, if it hath submitted to, and served the spiritual will, love, and mind; or else be forever separated from the enjoyment of such blessedness, if it hath rebelled against and refused obedience to such spiritual will and mind.

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Such is the gospel explanation of "the body," when fairly and candidly examined, and opened; and such are the true christian's perception and experience of it in his own heart and life; who "judgeth righteous judgment;" and "trieth every spirit, whether it be of God." When he heareth or readeth of the "body," he thinketh of the natural or rational mind, or will: When he heareth or readeth of the death of the "body," he thinketh of the separation of the natural or rational mind from the spiritual: When he heareth or readeth of bodily afflictions, he thinketh of those agonizing sorrows, and that piercing anguish, which the natural or rational mind feeleth and experienceth by reason of its departure from its lawful guardian, and guide, the spiritual and heavenly mind. Such are his conceptions of the "body," and such his understanding, which induceth him to be carefully cautious of separating the one from the other, lest his immortal spirit should be destroyed. Having now endeavoured to shew you, what is meant by "body," and what is truly "the body," let us consider,

Secondly, What is meant by "spirit."

If we view mankind in a fair light, we shall soon discover that their conceptions of the "spirit" are equally absurd as those concerning the "body."

When the earthly-minded and carnal man heareth or readeth of the "spirit," he thinketh of it only as an inhabitant of an earthly and perishing body: When he heareth or readeth of its separation from the body, he thinketh only of its departure from time to eternity: When he heareth or readeth of its

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afflictions,

afflictions and misery, he thinketh only of that punishment, which is the portion of the impenitent and unholy in the world to come. Hence he is sometimes led to think of these things, and to wish that his "body," or bodily and material life could be so governed, that the "spirit" might be happy to all eternity. This, however, as it proceedeth not from a love to, and delight in, the divine commandments, but from a spirit of carnal fear and dread, is soon drowned in the hurry of business, and the cares of the world; and is never productive of any salutary change. Not so the spiritual man. When he heareth or readeth of the "spirit," he thinketh of that spiritual principle, which openeth to him a communication with the heavenly world and kingdom: When he heareth or readeth of the separation of the spirit from the body, he thinketh of the closing up of every spiritual faculty, and the consequent obstruction of every blessed communication of goodness to man: When he heareth or readeth of affliction, he thinketh of that tender grief, that holy sorrow, and that spiritual mourning, which they undergo, who have tasted the "powers of redeeming love," who have, like Peter, perhaps suffered the power of the temptation for a time to surprize them, but, like Peter too, have shed the availing tears of humble penitence, and ardently long for the full enjoyment of the Lord's returning love. Such are his ideas, and such his apprehension of the spirit, which enable him, to unite "body with spirit," natural things with spiritual, earth with heaven, time with eternity, and make every occurrence, every circumstance, every period, every visitation, and every blessing of life, usefully subservient to his furtherance, advancement, growth and perfection in the divine nature.

Having

Having now considered, what is meant by "body," and what by "spirit," let us endeavour to shew,

Thirdly, How a separation of the two principles, the body and the spirit, produceth death, "for the body without the spirit is dead."

Man, by reason of the fall, hath his abode in the midst of three principles or natures, worlds, or kingdoms. The first is that of earth, whereby he is exposed to all the impure desires and affections of an earthly, sensual, and carnal life. The second is that, which is the natural, or rational mind, whereby he is enabled to rise out of the ruins of a bestial nature into the clearer light of rationality, or a state of thinking, judging, and acting for, and as from himself. The third is that of a spiritual quality, whereby he is enabled to have communication with the spiritual world, make further approaches to the throne of unutterable purity, and thus become a living form of love and wisdom, and a blessed angel in the kingdom of his heavenly Father; receiving all from the bounteous source of uncreated light and love. Upon a right and proper subordination of these principles, his happiness both here and hereafter, depends; and by a perpetual union of his natural or rational mind with his spiritual, his "body and his spirit," his very existence must be supported. This perhaps will be better understood, if we consider him in all the various states of his dependance upon the divine providence, and his humble resignation, and thankfulness in all of them. As for instance: When man is in an earthly and carnal state, he would willingly exalt himself above all that is of

God, worshipping his own propriety or self-love, and inverting every degree of the divine order, harmony and peace. Whilst he continueth thus, however, he can receive no communications, and consequently no comforts, from the Lord; inasmuch as his rational or natural mind being a slave, and in subjection, to the bestial and animal impulses of his material and fleshly nature; passion usurps the throne of reason; error arrogates to itself the name of rectitude; falsehood obtrudes itself into the place of truth; and sorrow, misery, disease, and death are the only visitants of such a PANDŒMONIUM. In such disorder, what admission, or what entrance can there be for the divine love and truth? The medium, that is, rationality, and a spiritual nature, whereby the bounty of heaven could be administered and introduced, are obstructed; and no avenue or inlet is left open to enlighten the darkened sight, to cleanse the mental ray; or impart one single beam of comfort, of happiness, or of peace, to the tormented, and deformed heart. Perhaps we shall better understand, what I have here advanced, if we consider the matter in another, and a plainer point of view.

The heart of man, we know, is often compared, in scripture, to a "house," and the Lord himself is called the "householder," or owner, of such "house," or heart. The different apartments of a material house, or building, as consisting of higher and lower, have communication with each other by means of some conjoining medium, and are thus united. Just so it is, with respect to that spiritual house, or building, the heart of man; which consisting of lower, that is earthly and carnal apartments, fit only
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for, and and inhabited by the demons of sin and the world, and higher apartments capable of receiving, and fit only for the reception of the Lord and the influences of his blessed spirit, must have some conveying medium between both, whereby the evil may be gradually removed, and the immortal spirit rescued from its oppressor ; and this medium is the natural or rational mind, which is fixed as a regenerating medium between the carnal, and spiritual mind. It is strictly according to this sense of the words that Our Lord himself said, " When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the *highest room* ; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him ; and he, that bade him, and thee, come, and say to thee, give this man place ; and thou begin with shame to take the *lowest room*. But, when thou art bidden, go, and sit down in the *lowest room*, that when he, that bade thee, cometh, he may say unto thee, friend, go up *higher* ; then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them, that sit at meat with thee."

From the whole of this passage it is indispensably clear, that by *highest* and *lowest rooms*, are meant the two principles in man, the natural, or rational, and the spiritual, because Our Lord himself represented the man, who had bidden guests to the wedding ; and the marriage represented the union of the regenerate with his kingdom of truth and love. When he advised, therefore, to take " the *lowest room*," he did not call him friend, but said, " Give this man place ;" plainly shewing the wickedness of those, who wish to become spiritual before they are become truly natural, or rational ; and thus deprive themselves of the benefits of his grace. When he had, however, taken the

the *lowest room*, that is, prepared his natural or rational mind for the communications of his goodness, he lovingly addresseth him, and saith, "Friend, go up *higher*, receive the further illuminations, and manifestations of my love, and truth in thy spiritual mind, because thou hast begun aright, and laid a sure, and lasting foundation for a spiritual mind, and building.

Hence we may see how a separation of the "body and spirit," the natural, or rational mind, and the spiritual, bringeth death; and how they will be reproved of the Lord, who do not thus unite and preserve them in a due subordination. Let us now,

Lastly, Point out the necessity of uniting in one holy marriage, and an inseparable bond, the "body and the spirit," which will be productive of an heavenly birth and offspring; and finally bring us to everlasting blessedness and glory.

We have already seen what is meant by "body," what by "spirit," and how a separation of the two bringeth death; and hence can soon perceive, how an union produceth an heavenly offspring, and birth, and bringeth to everlasting life. The food and nourishment of the natural, or rational mind is truth; the food and nourishment of the spiritual mind is love. Now we are convinced, that where either truth, or love is wanting, there is no life; inasmuch as they alone conjointly constitute and produce life; but where these fruits of heaven appear, they will ever be productive of obedience to the divine commandments, and thus bless us with every blessing, which the Lord can bestow.

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But there is still another sense, in which the words of my text may as usefully be applied to some; and these are they, who are only nominal professors of christianity; who often "name the name of Christ," but are not careful to "depart from iniquity." There is, indeed, a bodily worship, as well as a spiritual; and our outward deportment, and conduct should ever faithfully discover the inward motions of the spirit. But, alas! what havock, and what desolation, have not unmeaning forms, brought into the church of Christ! Men have long been separated from true vital piety; but in order more speciously to hide the inward depravity of their hearts, they have embraced every outward form, which could give a colour, or sanction to their criminal proceedings. Every outward form, however, is but an empty form still; nature without God is but nature still; unless filled, and renewed by that adorable goodness, which gives life to form; spirit to body; vivifies and regenerates the whole man; and manifests, in undissembling language, the language of a faithful obedience, the sincerity and integrity of their profession.----Which of us, beloved, is not more or less contaminated with the baneful influence of this spiritual poison? Which of us doth not attend more to the form, and appearance, than to the spirit, and life, of piety? We are careful enough, indeed, to appear in the house of God; we can mutter over our prayers; assume the *borrowed* air, and tone of thankfulness, and praise; we can pay, or appear to pay, attention to the preacher; we can attend upon the sacrament, and every ordinance of the church----but this, it is to be feared! is the utmost stretch, and extent of our piety---we can pray for forgiveness of sins, when we do not find, or sincerely

sincerely wish to find, ourselves sinners---we can pray for blessings, which we do not feel the want of---we can sing the songs of thankfulness, without experiencing any degree of gratitude-----we can return thanks, without knowing our obligations---we can admire the form, but not the spirit---we can reverence the place, but not that God, who fills all places, with his *omnipresence*---we can be zealous, but not sincere---we can be *worshippers*, but not of God---we can seem religious, though we are but hypocrites---we can be deceivers, though of ourselves---we can be careful, but not of our immortal souls---in short, we can love ourselves, but not that bountiful goodness, and redeeming love, which supports and sustains us--- we can be saints in form, but satans in reality---we can be angels in appearance, but devils in disguise---Which of us can?---which of us dare deny it? Many, it is to be lamented, cannot embrace, or receive the spirituality of the gospel---on *forms* they live---and God grant that in *forms* alone they may not die---because “the body without the spirit is dead.”

May we all consider whether we are not trusting to a “broken reed,” when we might be supported by the “staff of the Almighty”---and whether we are not running headlong to destruction, though we flatter ourselves, we are religious, and good; “For he is not a *Jew*, which is one outwardly; neither is that *circumcision*, which is *outward* in the *flesh*: but he is a *Jew*, which is one *inwardly*, and *circumcision* is that of the *heart*, in the *spirit*, and not in the *letter*; whose praise is not of *men*, but of *God*.”

S E R M O N

SERMON XV.

ACTS, Chap. xv. Ver. 41.

"AND HE WENT THROUGH SYRIA, AND CILICIA, CONFIRMING THE CHURCHES."

IN the preceding part of this chapter we find, that much contention, and dispute had arisen concerning "Circumcision." False teachers, then, from a variety of unchristian motives and false principles, had declared, that "except the people were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved;" and ignorant Enthusiasts, at the present day, are ready to assert, that, except ye be "confirmed after the manner of modern Confirmation;" ye cannot be saved; for, though their language may not be so forcible in its assertion, its artful, and vague meaning implies undoubtedly the same. The true disciples of the Redeemer, however, soon made it evident, that these sentiments were altogether vain, and nugatory, inasmuch as they were not able to bear it; when they said, "Why tempt ye GOD, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither we, nor our fathers, are able to bear;" and then truly informed them, what was necessary to salvation, and declared, "but we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they."

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In the earlier times of christianity, when persecution, and death itself, threatened and awaited the disciples of a crucified Redeemer, it much behoved and concerned those teachers, who had the real interests of their master, and the salvation of souls truly at heart, to build up, to strengthen, and to "confirm" their followers in a firm faith in, and pure love to, those holy truths, which they had received, and embraced. That this was their constant practice is plain from the preceding chapter, where we are told, that "when they," speaking of Paul and Barnabas, "had preached the gospel to that city, (viz. Derbe) and taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Corinth, and to Antioch, **CONFIRMING THE SOULS** of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith; inasmuch as they must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God."

What reasonable mind cannot hence, if it be so disposed, clearly learn, perceive, and be assured, that the "Confirming, or Confirmation," here spoken of, was not barely the external ceremony of "**LAYING ON OF HANDS**," but a Confirming, or Confirmation" of the hearts and souls of the believers; that is, a strengthening, and furthering of that grace, that faith, that love, that wisdom, and that truth, which is from the Lord Jesus Christ, in the lives, and practice, and obedience of the sincere and true disciples.

In order more fully to comprehend the full scope and design of the Apostle's "Confirming," as mentioned in my text, let us not be led away by a false

false zeal, and unchristian bigotry, but let us coolly, calmly, candidly, and fairly endeavour to point out.

First, What is meant by, and what truly is, "a church ;"

Secondly, What is meant by "Confirming," and what it is truly to "confirm, a church ;"

And lastly, conclude with some suitable exhortations, and advice.

First then let us consider, what is meant by, and what truly is, a "Church."

The word "CHURCH," it is much to be lamented, hath suffered much false interpretation from the mad zeal, and unhallowed fire of worldly, and carnal-minded men. In the time of the Jews, nothing was considered, or acknowledged to be a Temple, or "Church," but what was particularly formed, fashioned, conducted, and governed according to their own forms, their own rites, their own ceremonies, and their own apprehension of "a Church," as to its mere outward establishment, without any inward living purity, order, and beauty, corresponding thereto. Thus they were led to believe, that they alone were the Lord's true "Church" when, alas! they had not one single living character of the true "Church" remaining ; that they alone were able to expound, explain, and teach his word aright, when our Lord himself declared, that "they rendered his word of none effect by their traditions ;" that they were the peculiar people of the Lord, when they even "crucified the Lord of life, and glory ;" and that the rest of the world, being in a state of rude barbarism, and gentile ignorance, could

not be saved, though our Lord expressly declared, that "many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, whilst the children of the kingdom shall be shut out."---In our time, the word "CHURCH" is as falsely, as improperly, and unhappily applied. The "Church" is considered merely in its external, or outward form, and meaning, without any of those living, and essential qualities, and properties, of which the true "Church" of the Lord consists. Hence arises the aversion of ignorant, weak, and deluded persons to the word "Chapel, or place of worship;" hence arises the aversion of the thoughtless, and impenitent to acknowledge the "Omnipresence" of the Lord; and hence arises that real evil, and that merely seeming good, which they have, and receive, who love the form, but not the life; who admire the ceremony, but not that inward piety, which it is calculated and intended to represent; and who take greater pleasure in caviling about their empty forms, their barren opinions, and dead worship, than in practising, fulfilling, and obeying the pure truths, and holy commandments of brotherly charity, and love.

Such was not, however, the Apostle's apprehension of the word "Church. They knew, they felt, by happy experience, that form, without life, was mere evil and death; and that rites and ceremonies were useless and unavailable to everlasting salvation, without a right understanding, and faithful practice of those things, which they represented. When they looked, therefore, for a "Church," they did not seek, or labour to establish an elegant building with large revenues, and a lordly income, on which

which they might live at ease, whilst they would perform no duty and service, but leave that to the care of others, whose misery it would have been to labour, and starve---they did not endeavour to please, to court, and flatter the rich, the learned, the genteel, and polite---but they sought for a true "Church," a heart, a family, a house, a society of holy and humble men, seeking for, and earnestly desiring the Lord Jesus Christ to establish his "Church," his own heavenly power, nature, spirit, life, and tempers, in their souls.

By "Church" we all of us understand a place "consecrated" by the Lord, not by man, for his service alone. Would not any rational mind blush, then, to suppose that the Lord consecrates matter without spirit, and void of life, as senseless stones and the like, when he readeth in the holy word these blessed truths, "the Lord dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but in him, that is of a contrite, and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Where, then, can the Lord dwell, and what can he consecrate, but our hearts, and souls, and spirits, for St. Paul saith to his christian brethren, "Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God; and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you;" and then adds, "if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are;" whereby is plainly meant, that if any man defile his heart, his will, his love, and life, by any impure, unholy, and wicked practices, he then defiles the temple, or "Church of God, and becometh liable and subject to a state of condemnation, misery, and death eternal. By "Church," then, it is evident, is meant,

meant, not an external building, composed of perishing, and frail materials, but by "Church" is meant a heart, a family, a house, a company, or society of holy men, filled with meekness, with humility, with patience, with long-suffering, with gentleness, with brotherly-kindness and charity, which are permanent, lasting, and durable, which are immaterial, spiritual, and divine; and which, proceeding from the Lord, the source of all purity, and holiness, partake of his nature, live by his spirit, and form and constitute his "Church." It is of such a heart, such a family, such a house, such a society, or company of holy men, that we speak, when we say, the Lord will protect and bless his Church. It is according to the same meaning that the "Church" is called "Catholic; which signifies, general, or universal," consisting of all those in every country, of every nation, and every tongue under heaven, who really and truly, not with a mere oral profession, believe in, and love, the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Manifested God and Redeemer. It is also, according to the same sense, that the word "Church" is used in my text, where it is written, "And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the CHURCHES;" and again, "Greet Priscilla, and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus; likewise greet the CHURCH, that is in their house;" and again, "The CHURCHES of Asia salute you;" and again, "Salute the brethren, which are at Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the CHURCH, which is in his house." From these passages it is undeniably evident, that the "CHURCH" meaneth, and is, a heart, a family, a house, a company, or society of holy men, fearing and loving the Lord their God with all their hearts, and practising the heavenly laws of brotherly kindness,

kindness, neighbourly charity, and universal love. When you speak, or hear, of a "Church," you must not imagine it to be solely a material building, endowed with large revenues, and set apart to offer external, and bodily worship, forms, and service; but a spiritual building, endued with power from on high, and set apart for internal and inward devotion, and service, composed of an holy union of many pure hearts, wishes, affections, desires, and love, each being individually, as well as all making conjunctively, one true "Church" of the Lord, founded upon a sure Rock, "the Rock of ages," the Lord himself being "the head, and cornerstone," and all the members thereof built up by him, in all the beauty, order, regularity, strength and perfection of a divine "Church," and Temple; according to those words of the Lord by St. John, "Him, that overcometh, will I make a Pillar, in the Temple of my God."

Having now endeavoured to shew, what is meant by, and what truly is, and constitutes, "a Church," let us proceed to shew,

Secondly, What is meant by "confirming, and what it is truly to confirm a Church;" for "he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches."

As by "CHURCH" is not signified merely a natural, and material Church, but an inward and spiritual Church; so by "CONFIRMING" is not meant merely a natural, but a spiritual, "CONFIRMING." To "confirm," it is well known, signifies to strengthen, to fasten, and firmly establish upon a sure and lasting foundation. Now to "confirm"

firm" a person in a natural, carnal, and unregenerate state, is to "confirm" him in a natural, carnal, and unregenerate life and spirit; and consequently produceth not purer comforts, more exalted pleasure, or more heavenly delights; but more sensual desires, more depraved appetites, and more carnal gratifications. Such a "CONFIRMING, or CONFIRMATION," however, is not the "CONFIRMING, or CONFIRMATION," mentioned by the Apostles, but a Confirming, or Confirmation, which hath unhappily been fed, and supported, by the false, hypocritical, and fallen spirit of this world, and constitutes a part of those baneful dregs and remains of **POPERY**, which still pollute, and defile what is called "**The CHURCH.**"

When the Apostles were heretofore called upon to "confirm" a Church, or member of a Church, they first enquired, examined, and proved what they had to confirm; they enquired, whether such "Church," or such "member of a Church," had an inward sensibility of the Lord's regenerating and redeeming presence, love, and truth in their souls; and then, after a satisfactory, clear, and comfortable proof thereof, they were zealous, active, lively, and sincere ("not for form, but conscience sake") in their endeavours to strengthen, and "confirm" them, in the same spirit of pure love, fervent charity, universal benevolence, and the "unadulterated word of truth." Our modern teachers, and modern examiners, (shameful, yet awful contrast!) far, very far, different from the primitive disciples, consider the mere repetition of a set form of words, and an inexperienced oral confession of faith; consider the bare "imposition, or laying on of hands," externally,

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as necessary to salvation. Hence some, within the compass of our own knowledge, and observance, have published * **BILLS**, and marked out bounds, **Y** and

* Previous to the time appointed for confirming the young Persons in the town, and neighbourhood of Blackburn, the following Advertisement made its appearance, being publicly affixed to the walls in different parts:—

" **BLACKBURN, JUNE 24, 1794.**

" **WHEREAS** the Bishop of Chester intends to **CONFIRM** the young people within the parish of Blackburn, in the Parish Church, upon Wednesday, the 30th Day of July next, at eight o'clock in the Forenoon,

" All parents are hereby **REQUESTED** to send their children, who are of the age of fourteen years, and upwards, to be catechized, and examined in the Parish Church, immediately after divine service on Wednesdays, Fridays, and other prayer-days, which happen between the present time, and the day of Confirmation.

" The Members of the Church of England are desired to take Notice, that no young person in the town and neighbourhood of Blackburn **CAN** be **CONFIRMED** by **THE BISHOP**, without having a **CERTIFICATE** of his **QUALIFICATION**, signed by the **MINISTERS** of **THE PARISH CHURCH**, or of St. John's, and by **NO OTHER PERSON.**"

Before this procedure, which is without precedent in this place, the author had no intention of preaching upon a subject of this nature. Many of his hearers wished to have his opinion herein. He complied from motives of "charity to their dark estate." He disclaims any party-spirit, or rancour herein; and had not misrepresentation made it necessary, this discourse had not made its appearance in this publication.

Charity, and "pure religion" are inseparably united. Our Church, whatever a certain **DIVINE** hath asserted of having a "**LEGAL SECURITY**", that the **DOCTRINES** which he preacheth and teacheth, are **ORTHODOX**, and pure," yet teacheth us in her **LITANY** to pray to the Lord, "That he would be pleased to **FORGIVE** our **ENEMIES**, **PERSECUTORS**, and **SLANDERERS**, and to **TURN** their hearts." "Charity," saith the Apostle, "never faileth;" and even a Rev. Preacher tells us, † "That we are commanded to view, with fraternal affection, all those, who profess the christian religion, as becomes the disciples of Our Lord, and Saviour; and that as the duty of loving the brethren was prescribed with much propriety, when the disciples of Christ were few in number, and their religious **OPINIONS** exposed them to **EVERY SORT OF INDIGNITY, AND OPPRESSION**, from their **HEATHEN, and JEWISH ENEMIES**, so it is, perhaps, no less necessary **NOW**, when christians are divided into numerous **SECTS, and PARTIES**;" justly exclaiming, "How strangely perverse, and insatuated is the human mind, which thus converts the plan, designed to establish **PEACE** on earth, and **GOOD-WILL** among men, into a system of enmity, and discord!"—What a pity it is, that divine truth is not always manifested by a corresponding practice, but that ‡ "The schemes of **INTEREST, and AMBITION** will be pursued, though **REASON, and RELIGION** advise the contrary, and **EXPERIENCE** repeatedly tells us, that they terminate in **DISAPPOINTMENT** and **VEXTATION.**"

† *Fast Sermon.*

‡ *Ibid.*

and prescribed limits to this interesting and salutary form. None, however, * CAN be admitted to this **INDISPENSABLE CEREMONY**, who have not received, from particular **PERSONS**, a **RECOMMENDATION**, or **DISPENSATION**, thus to be admitted to Church Fellowship, and Church Communion. What qualifications then are required, and what sacrifices from **YOU** demanded, to be admitted to this **GREAT PRIVILEGE**----only a verbal assent to a stated creed, and the unlimited surrender of the emoluments of your "material Church"----Parents, however, would do well to consider, and take care, what they permit, what they do, and how they act herein.----They would do well to consider, that every external form, without the inward grace signified thereby, is but an external form still ; and that if they suffer and permit their children blindly to rush into, and profane the sacred ceremonies of religion, without knowing, feeling, observing, and practising the hidden and spiritual exercises contained therein ; if they permit them to be deluded by, and place their hope in, empty forms, and unmeaning shadows, the sin will for ever lie at their door, and they be accountable for the transgression.--What ideas, in general, of "pure religion," and inward devotion, hath a child of fourteen?----What faith in, what love and obedience to, their Redeemer, do we generally perceive in them?--What suitable preparation for a promise so sacred?----What little observance, alas ! of such promise, when made?----And yet how uneasy do the unbelieving make themselves on such an occasion ! Could they but, for a moment, seriously consider the solemn question,

* "Can the annals of history furnish a similar instance of systematic intolerance?"

[Note to Fast Sermon.]

question, which is asked, " Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise, and vow, that was made in your name at your baptism ; ratifying, and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe, and to do all those things, which your Godfathers, and Godmothers, then undertook for you ? " Consider, I say, this awful question, and, if possible, its more awful answer, " I do," and reflect upon your childrens' ignorance herein, their want of knowledge, their want of instruction, their want of an inward, and living experience hereof, and, above all, their want of will and inclination to fulfil, and perform this ; and then tell me, candidly tell me ; whether you think it adviseable to permit them to violate ordinances, whose inward meaning they do not comprehend, and consequently to perjure, and condemn themselves ?-----" Imposition, or the laying on, of HANDS," is a form, or usage of long duration.-----Our Lord often laid his hands upon the sick, the diseased, and the afflicted, and they recovered-----but then the objects were inwardly sensible of their wants, and maladies, and desirous of having them removed, not doubting but there was power sufficient in him to effect this. " Imposition, or laying on of hands," is expressive of a divine communication, and power from above ; because the " HAND " denoteth power. Every outward form, which is regular, and orderly, is good----still, however, it is useless, without the inward, living characters and qualities, which it represents.-----" Confirmation " is good, when there is an inward experience of its internal blessedness and use---without such experience, it is dead, hurtful, and destructive ; inasmuch as it induceth the ignorant and

thoughtless to rest all their hopes upon what is but a dead form. Which of us hath received its living power, as well as outward form? Which of us, in consequence hereof, hath lived more soberly, piously, and godly? Are your children hereby made more loving, and affectionate? Are they more obedient, and dutiful to you? Are they more respectful to superiors? Are they more given up to the Lord? If not---Why thus aggravate their sin, and encrease their condemnation? An immortal soul surely is of some consequence.----It hath numberless incitements to evil---and there is no need to forward its propensity to transgress!

I trust, what has been said, will tend, in some measure, to remove those scruples, which some weak, and tender minds have entertained upon this subject. My sentiments I have delivered with freedom, not forgetting how difficult it is to combat vulgar prejudices, and long-confirmed customs.----
 “CONFIRMATION” I approve of----“CONFIRMATION” I recommend, when *form and life*, when the *ceremony* and its *inward power*, are united.---Without these true characters, it will ever be found useless, hurtful, and destructive.----It would be happy; if every parent would be as zealous in other particulars of the church, as he is in this.-----After “Confirmation,” it is expected, and required, that such “Confirmed Persons” should, at the first opportunity, attend the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. This is a stumbling-block, which they cannot remove.---They will encourage them to be “confirmed,” but not to receive the “Holy Sacrament,” when, yet an unpreparedness for the one will ever prove an unfitness for the other; inasmuch as our
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Lord himself hath said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no LIFE in you."

To conclude. Let us never forget, that "one thing is needful," and that is, to "love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves." Let us remember, that no "Church" can be "confirmed," nor any member of a "Church," till such "Church" is first formed, and built, and that we can never form, or build a "Church," or become true members of a "Church," till, being grounded and rooted in the pure love of the Lord, and his holy commandments, and believing in, and trusting to, his divine providence, mercy, and care, we become true and living members of his "mystical body the Church," formed after his image, and fashioned in his likeness, and abounding in all the graces, virtues, properties, qualities, and perfections of the "divine nature." Let us remember, that, as all who were "circumcised, after the manner of Moses," were not circumcised, and "pure in heart;" that as all, who heard Paul, were not living members of the Lord's true "Church;" so neither are all they, who are "confirmed according to mere outward ordinances," "confirmed in the living power of the Great Redeemer, and members of his true Church;" but, that as "circumcision is not that of the flesh, but that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of MAN, but of GOD;" so "Confirmation" is that of a "pure heart," a good life, a renewed will, an holy love; and as "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith, that worketh by love;" so neither doth external "confirmation
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avail any thing," nor a want of such confirmation, but "a new creature," a new heart, new nature, new affections, new will, a new love, a "new tongue," not natural, but spiritual; not earthly, but heavenly; not fading, but lasting and eternal.

And, O Holy and Merciful Redeemer, enable us, by sincere repentance, by reformation and regeneration of heart and life, so to come unto thee, that we may receive the "true confirmation, the laying-on of thine own divine hand," the communication, and the blessing, of thine own holy love and truth; which will build us up into an "Holy Church and Temple, consecrated by thy presence, and confirmed by thy power and thy right hand, for ever and ever."

SERMON

 SERMON XVI.

ISAIAH, Chap. lviii. Ver. 6, 7.

"IS NOT THIS THE FAST, THAT I HAVE CHOSEN, TO LOOSE THE BANDS OF WICKEDNESS, TO UNDO THE HEAVY BURDENS, AND TO LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE, AND THAT YE BREAK EVERY YOKE?"

"IS IT NOT TO DEAL THY BREAD TO THE HUNGRY, AND THAT THOU BRING THE POOR, THAT ARE CAST OUT, TO THY HOUSE? WHEN THOU SEEST THE NAKED, THAT THOU COVER HIM, AND THAT THOU HIDE NOT THYSELF FROM THINE OWN FLESH?"

IN every age, and in every state of the church, there have been circumstances and occurrences, big with the most important events, and pregnant with the most afflictive evils. Happy, indeed, should I feel myself, if, on this day, we had met together for holy purposes, without having to lament these external disorders of the world at large; but, alas! we are all intimately connected with, and feelingly affected by, these visitations; and happy would it be for us, if, availing ourselves of this indubitable proof of the miseries of the outward world, we should be led to explore their cause and origin, and "comparing natural things with spiritual," be induced to investigate the state of our own hearts, and, "when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, to learn righteousness."

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The confusion, and distress of the outward world have their rise, and foundation in the spiritual world; or, to explain myself more fully, there is nothing evil, and disorderly in this life, but what ariseth from the fallen, and perverted state of man's heart, for the Apostle declared, that "from within, out of the heart of man, all evil things proceed, and defile the man;" and Our Lord himself said to the wicked Jews of old, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world: I am not of this world." Hence hath always arisen the necessity of "fasting," of repentance, of reformation, and regeneration, to avert every impending evil, and every threatening storm. It is for this very reason that OUR MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN hath been pleased to appoint this day, as a day of "fasting," and humiliation, that man might, more particularly on such an occasion, consider his own awful condition, and by viewing the depravity of his own heart, which is the cause of all inward and outward troubles, be enabled, by repentance, and reformation, to secure both the welfare of his own soul, and the peace, the happiness, and the prosperity of these realms.

In order, therefore, that we may "fast" to our present, as well as future benefit, let us enquire into the true nature, blessedness, and design of fasting, by considering both what we have to undo, as also what we have to do, in this important matter; for the Prophet saith, that "the fast, which the Lord hath chosen, is to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke:"----this he tells us is what we have to undo. Our next step is, "to deal our bread
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to the hungry, to bring the poor, that are cast out, to our houses, to cover the naked, when we behold him, and not to hide ourselves from our own flesh."

If we consider the true import, and meaning of these words, we shall see in what a miserable, and deplorable state man is, when immersed in a carnal, sensual, and fallen life. In such a condition, he is represented by the Prophet, as a prisoner of the most infamous kind, fettered and bound in his prison-house of sin, with the bands of self-love, earthly-mindedness, the lust of concupiscence, and every other affection and principle of unregenerate nature. We cannot but commiserate the man, whose body is thus imprisoned and fettered with links of iron, into whose dark, and gloomy cell no glimpse of day can penetrate. We do well to commiserate, and pity such a distressed sufferer----only let us be grieved, and sorry for ourselves, who are bound, spiritually bound, with more afflictive bonds, and shut up in darker cells, than those of earth; being bound with every cord of sensual affection; forging, and forming the links to bind ourselves, and willingly depriving ourselves of "that liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free." The next thing, which the Prophet requires of us, is to "undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free." In this description man is represented as "heavy-laden," oppressed, and galled with some intolerable burthen; and such doth the Great Redeemer declare all sinners to be, when he saith, "Come unto me, all ye, that are weary, and heavy-laden, and I will refresh you; for my yoke is easy, and my burthen light." Sin is, indeed, a most grievous burthen. In our dark state we cannot behold it as such---we view every thing through a false

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medium, "calling darkness light, and light darkness." Till our hands are at liberty; till we have "loosed our bands;" we cannot "undo the heavy burthens;" and till we have both "loosed the bands, and undone the burthens," we shall for ever remain in a state of captivity and slavery, and shall neither let the "oppressed go free, nor break any yoke."

Such appears to be the spiritual bondage, slavery, oppression, and suffering, under which every unrenewed and unregenerate heart labours, and from which the Lord, by the mouth of his Prophet, exhorteth every man to endeavour to deliver himself. In the former part of my text, the necessity of true repentance, of a renunciation, and putting away of all sin, is clearly pointed out; and how necessary it is for us to "cast away the works of darkness," before we attempt to "put upon us the armour of light;" or in the words of the sublime Isaiah, first "cease to do evil," and then "learn to do well." Many, alas! cannot bear this fundamental doctrine of repentance—they would begin to be holy, and enjoy the comforts of holiness, before they have made any sacrifices for sin—they would willingly "rejoice in the Lord," without suffering any sorrow; whereas spiritual joy can never come, till we have experienced a spiritual grief; for Our Lord saith, "Blessed are they, that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Let us then seriously ask ourselves, whether we feel ourselves inwardly bound with the "bands of wickedness, and heavy-laden with the burthen of our sins;" whether we feel ourselves of the number of those unhappy ones, of whom it is written, "They have made a covenant with death, and are in agreement with the grave;" whether we find ourselves oppressed with its lawless power,

power, and dominion; and whether, in consequence of such enquiry, and such experiences, we are desirous of breaking every yoke, every bond, every tie, every affection, which would bring us to, and keep us under, the dominion of the powers of darkness? Sincerity alone in the examination, and enquiry, will secure to us a delivery therefrom. If we are so happy as to experience, that we are in bondage, from an inward sensibility of our corruptions, from an agonizing conflict between the "flesh and the spirit, the law of the members, and the law of the mind," we shall, doubtless! with pleasure put off, whatever would obstruct our progress in the divine life, that we may "run," without oppression and fear, "the race, that is set before us."

Having now shewn, what we have to "undo," or what we have to renounce, in the way of repentance, let us next enquire, what we have to "do," in the way of reformation and regeneration.

When man hath faithfully performed the work of true repentance; he hath then "ceased from evil;" but, alas! all this will avail him little, if he stop here. Something must be done, as well as avoided—some heavenly graces and qualities must be grafted in, when the fallen concupiscencies are rooted out. The first step, in this process, is, to "deal our bread to the hungry, and bring the poor, that are cast out, to our houses."

By the "hungry and poor," are meant our own spiritual affections, our own fallen will, and darkened understanding, which being robbed of their own proper nourishment, the "bread of life, which came

down from heaven," and that "wisdom, which cometh from above," have hitherto, in the unregenerate state, been fed only with sensual food, which tended to ruin and destroy them. This food, however, they were delighted with; till, having "loosed the bands of wickedness, undone the heavy burthens, and suffered the oppressed to go free," they, by repentance have found, that they were hungry, destitute of the "living and true bread," and in a state of the most deplorable poverty. Hungry and thirsty, and poor we must all be, till fed with heavenly food; till we are nourished, and strengthened with the Lord's divine love, and wisdom; and poor must we ever remain, till we attain spiritual riches, even the graces, the affections, the desires, and happiness of the divine nature, which alone can make us rich. But where are we to bring these hungry, these poor affections, and dispositions? Where are we to foster, cherish, nurse, and raise them up? Where? Where--but in our "houses," that is our hearts, which are the spiritual habitations of every pure, or impure principle, or love? The heart, in its unregenerate state, is called by the prophet, "an habitation for dragons, and a court for owls;" it is also called by the Apostle a "house," where it is written, "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh thro' dry places, seeking rest, and finding none. Then he saith, I will return into my house, from whence I came out." In its regenerate state, it is called "The house of God, the temple of the Lord, and the dwelling of the most high;" as where it is written, "Thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity; I dwell in the high, and holy place; with him also, that is of a contrite, and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart

heart of the contrite ones." Whenever, therefore, we cultivate those affections, which are "not of this world;" whenever we bring into our hearts, those meek, humble, patient, and loving tempers, which are "of God;" whenever we have "the same mind, which was also in Christ Jesus;" we then "deal our bread to the hungry; and bring the poor, that were cast out, to our houses." The last precept, is "when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh."

To be "naked" is to be without intelligence, and understanding, without knowledge and wisdom to direct us aright. When man is in evil of life, he hath then no true knowledge of God, or of his holy word; because nothing is true knowledge, but what hath its foundation in pure love, and manifesteth itself in an holy obedience to, and observance of, such light and knowledge. To "cover the naked" must signify, then, to be engaged in the knowledge, and truth and wisdom of the Lord, from pure love, and by, bringing such knowledge into obedience of heart and life, to cover the hitherto naked soul with heavenly light and knowledge; according to what the Psalmist saith of the Lord, "He covereth himself with light," that is with truth, "as with a garment;" and again it is written, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." If we see ourselves without this spiritual covering, let us immediately endeavour, through the divine aid, and assistance, to "cover our nakedness" therewith.----Remember, how feelingly the prophet applieth the whole of this interesting description of a true "fasting" to ourselves---

selves.—Remember, that we ourselves are the persons, who must exercise all this benevolence and mercy to ourselves; for he saith, at the conclusion, “and hide not thyself from thine own flesh.” What is, or what can, be so near and dear unto a man, as “his own flesh?” And what can, or should, be so dear to man, as his own soul? Men, indeed, have too long considered “fasting,” and every other sacred ordinance in its outward sense, according to the bare letter; without attending to the inward meaning, and power thereof. They have, indeed, outwardly “put on sackcloth, and ashes, and yet have found pleasure, and exacted all their labors; they have fasted for strife, and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; they have bowed down their heads, like a bulrush;” but have not observed the inward sense thereof, viz. a day, or state, of inward humiliation, a state of sincere repentance, and true contrition.

To “fast,” we all know, signifies to abstain from whatever supporteth life. Now life is of two kinds, natural, or earthly, and spiritual, or divine. Natural “fasting,” however, cannot purify an immortal spirit, but a spiritual “fasting,” or an abstaining from those gratifications, which further the growth of the inward life of sin and evil. How men of sense became so dark and blind, as to imagine that “fasting” consisted in withholding from the body its material food, and sustenance, or “that the operations of divine grace in any measure depended upon such an abstinence,” I cannot in any other manner account for, than that they are entirely ignorant of the Lord, his holy word, and the process, and order of his divine providence. When it said,
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that man should abstain from bodily nourishment, it is meant that he should abstain from those sensual affections, those carnal delights, and those fallen desires, which feed the bodily, or gross, and sensual life. By abstaining from such food as this, which is unholy, and impure, he is enabled, through the divine mercy, "to put away the evil of his doings" from before the Lord, which alone is available to everlasting salvation. Some of you may have abstained this morning from your usual bodily repast---What will that avail?---Mere Popery, and delusion! unless you have "fasted" from sin, and evil at the same time! for true fasting consists in "loosing the bands of wickedness, in undoing the heavy burthens, in letting the oppressed go free, in dealing our bread to the hungry, in bringing the poor, that are cast out, to our houses, in covering the naked, and not hiding ourselves from our own flesh." Men, indeed, may boast of their patriotism, as much as they please. Patriots I pray they may be!---They may talk of valour, courage, and heroism, as much as they will; but rest assured, that he is the noblest patriot, who, by "honouring all men, to whom honour is due, loving the brotherhood, fearing God, and honouring the King;" who, by "purity of heart," uprightness of life, and consistency of conduct, secureth the care, and protection of heaven, inasmuch as hereby "the Lord himself is his defence, and the Mighty God of Jacob his refuge."

What, alas! has brought on these outward convulsions in a neighbouring country?---What?---but the want of all inward, and true piety---a placing of all the means of happiness in barren, external forms, without any living, and inward power therein.

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The inward corruptions, and defilements of their nature had long been lurking in their very vitals, and the inmost foldings of their frame; till at last, like inward putrifying sores, they burst into open day, and manifested the quality, and inveteracy of the latent poison. Prone to dissipation of every kind---ever changing---ever varying---ever new---like the fabled Proteus, they had never long continued in the same state. "Thus, idly busy, rolled their world away"---till levity, and vanity---till folly, and superstition, gave place to more than savage wildness, and heathen barbarism---till even the before dubious vestige of religion could no where be traced---till rites, and forms, and ceremonies, hitherto worshipped, and adored, were treated with ridicule, and disdain---till the once venerated pile (intended, no doubt, for better purposes,) was filled with "National Guards," and armed bands---till the soul's immortality, the christian's surest anchor, was disowned---till death was declared to be only "an eternal sleep"---and till at last, to finish the catalogue, and completely "fill up the measure of their crimes," the very existence of the Almighty was denied; and their blasphemy formally sanctioned by the legislative body! If such be the depravity of unregenerate nature, what great reason have we inwardly to "fast," and amend our doings!--If such be the deceitfulness of the human heart!--Human nature! shudder at the recital!--*Nominal* Christian! tremble for thy *forms*!

What! though Britain hath not yet (and oh! may it never!) experience such outward convulsions! yet, there is much evil veiled within! Pleased with vanities, and fed with empty *forms*; we are
hastening

hastening (it is to be feared!) apace to our destruction! Great are our professions!---great is our natural knowledge!---Little is our practice!---little our spiritual wisdom! Such was the conduct of a neighbouring country---Our imitations, alas! are too exact!---Our conduct too nearly allied!---May we all, therefore, in good earnest, endeavour to forsake, and leave so destructive a precedent, so bad an example! May we all endeavour to find, and feel ourselves sinners; and thus be led to mourn with a spiritual mourning, because of our defilements; that having thus "fasted" from all sin, and uncleanness, and having mourned for our transgressions, we may "be comforted;" and by thus "loosing the bands of wickedness, undoing the heavy burthens, letting the oppressed go free, and breaking every yoke; by dealing our bread to the hungry, bringing the poor, that are cast out, to our houses, and covering the naked," may at last experience the full meaning and blessed efficacy of those words of the prophet, where he saith, "Oh! thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted! behold! I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with Sapphires; I will make thy windows of Agates, thy gates of Carbuncles; and all thy borders of pleasant stones! Violence shall no more be heard in thy land---Wasting, nor desolation within thy palaces; but thou shalt call thy *walls Salvation*, and thy *gates Praise*.---The *sun* shall be no more thy *light* by day; neither, for brightness, shall the *moon* give *light* unto thee; but the *Lord* shall be unto thee an everlasting *light*; and thy *God* thy *glory*.

SERMON XVII.

i TIM. Chap. ii. Ver. 1, 2, 3.

"I EXHORT, THEREFORE, THAT, FIRST OF ALL, SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND GIVING OF THANKS, BE MADE FOR ALL MEN; FOR KINGS, AND FOR ALL, THAT ARE IN AUTHORITY, THAT WE, MAY LEAD A QUIET, AND PEACEABLE LIFE IN ALL GODLINESS, AND HONESTY; FOR THIS IS GOOD, AND ACCEPTABLE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR."

THE one only grand end, and design of the Lord, in all his dispensations, was to teach and instruct mankind in the attainment of every comfort, and every blessing, both for time and eternity. That state or that period of our existence, which is called Time, however, is only preparatory to a future, and if possible, more important æra, when we shall receive either the full enjoyment of the Divine Love and Mercy, or be for ever separated from such enjoyment, according as we have employed our little span here, in obedience to the truths of Divine Wisdom, or in the criminal indulgence of every fallen, sensual, and earthly affection, and principle.

Morality, or the moral duties of life, are so inseparably connected, and united with religion, or the spiritual exercises of the heart, that to separate either from the other, must necessarily ruin and destroy

destroy both. True, spiritual devotion is alone to be found, where sound morality is practised; inasmuch as this outward, or moral life, is but the BODY, wherein the fruits of the spiritual, or inner man, can be manifested, or have their abode. The manner, in which this moral and spiritual principle may be obtained, is every where pointed out in scripture, as having its foundation, growth, progress, and perfection, in a spirit of Charity, Affection, Benevolence, and Kindness to our fellow creatures, because "no man can love God, whom he hath not seen, if he loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen." The proof of this sincere Brotherly Charity and Affection, can only be had from the outward actions, and outward declarations of the outward or natural man; and can no where be more clearly pointed out to every sincere and pious enquirer after truth, than in the words of St. Paul to his beloved fellow-labourer in Christ, when he says, "I therefore exhort, that first of all, Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks, be made for all men; for Kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness, and honesty; for this is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

Let me, therefore, bespeak your most careful and serious attention, whilst I endeavour to shew you,

First, What it is "to make Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions, and to give Thanks, for all men,"

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Secondly,

Secondly, Endeavour to convince you, how particularly necessary it is "to make supplications, prayers, and intercessions, and to give thanks for Kings, and for all that are in authority."

Thirdly, Point out to you, how such a conduct will secure to us "a quiet, and peaceable life, begetting in us all godliness, and honesty;"

And lastly, Endeavour to prove to you, that such a life alone "is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

First, then, I must endeavour to shew you, what it is, "to make Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions, and to give thanks for all men:" And may the divine mercy of the Lord so warm your hearts, that you may be edified, and comforted thereby!

We are all of us sufficiently sensible, what is meant by "Supplication, Prayer, intercession, and giving of thanks," as far as they have relation to their natural meaning and signification; that it implies an ardent longing, and earnest desire for comforts, for favors, for benefits, for protection, and safety to those, for whom we thus entreat. What great need we all of us have of thus "supplicating, praying, interceding, and giving thanks for all men," must be evident, when we behold with what trials we are perplexed, with what dangers we are beset, with what infirmities we are encompassed, with what weaknesses we are born; with what propensity to evil, and with what aversion to goodness we are filled! But this spirit of brotherly love, and charity, must be exercised not only to individuals, but to all mankind, as children of one common father, as servants, and worshippers of one and the same Blessed God,

God, and Redeemer; endeavouring thus, like the divine goodness, to communicate happiness to all around, and to establish, that order, harmony, and love, which constitute true, and effectual "Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of thanks." "To make supplication, prayer, intercession, and to give thanks for all men," is to implore such blessings for others, as they stand in need of, from an inward, spiritual feeling; from a sincere desire of usefulness; from a design of fulfilling that divine commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thyself;" from a love of the Lord's spiritual kingdom, and its growth in man; that the disorder, confusion, discord, and misery of this world, and the flesh may be removed, not for the sake of earthly blessings, but of eternal joys; "not for custom, but for conscience sake." Doubtless, it was from this spirit, that St. Paul thus addressed Timothy of old; doubtless it was from his own example, and practice, that he thus spake, having felt, by happy experience, the satisfaction arising from such practice. But the good Apostle is not content, does not rest satisfied with this general exhortation of "making Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks for all men;" but descends to particulars, thereby intimating to us, the more than common need there is of offering up our prayers for all those, who are more immediately engaged. He mentions *Kings*, as being of all others the most exalted, and in consequence of such exaltation, engaged in the more important, and interesting business of life. As if he had said, "Though thou prayest for all mankind without exception; though thou enterest into the sorrows, the maladies, the afflictions, the miseries, and evils of each, and according to their necessities, proportionest

proportionest thy requests ; yet thou art more immediately bound to pray for *those*, who, by virtue of their station, stand in need of it. *They* are the *representatives* of thy Redeemer, and mine ; they are, through the divine permission, the *head* of the *body*, and, as such, have many cares, many anxieties, for the weaker members, each of which must depend upon their guidance, their government, their direction for counsel, for instruction, for assistance, and help. Pray, therefore, that they may rule, and that they may govern, with pure wisdom, with a sound understanding, with an upright heart ! Pray, that no evil may befall them, no distress may happen unto them ! Pray, that they may be happy, pray, that they may be useful, pray, that they may be good. Never let thy *allegiance* be shaken, never let thy fidelity be weakened, never let thy integrity be moved ; but follow the example of thy Redeemer, who complied with every outward ordinance, who “ rendered unto *Cæsar* his due, tribute to whom tribute, and honor, to whom honor.”

St. Paul well knew, how particularly necessary it was to pray for *them*; inasmuch as without an hearty desire for their good, no advantage could be received, no benefit derived. It is ever proper, that there exist a mutual affection between persons of different stations, and different employments; because, where there is a want of *charity*, there must be a with-holding, or with-drawing of *union*, and conjunction; and ruin, or death, must be the certain consequence. It is according to this sense of my argument, that our Church makes the Benediction between the Minister and the People mutual, where it is said, “ The Lord be with you--And with thy spirit ;

spirit;" and it is to the same purpose, where it is written, "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Good can never be produced but from some conjunction; and no conjunction can be effected but by charity and love. It is by means of love that conjunction is effected between the Lord and man; it is by means of love that man is united with man; and it is by means of a power and desire to be united, that conjunction is at any time accomplished between different objects. If the head be faint, the whole body will languish; and the pain, that racks the tortured limbs, will bring sickness upon every part. The same care, therefore, must be exercised towards all, and every part, lest the affliction of the one bring sorrow to the other.

After having mentioned *Kings*, the Apostle adds all, that are in authority, thus gradually falling in the scale from the highest to the lowest, from the first to the last, and shewing how every link is secured by mutual assistance and mutual support. That there ever was, from the creation, those, who exercised some degree or kind of authority, is clear from every page of the Old Testament. In the time of the Patriarchs, every parent was the ruler, or had authority over his own household; in the time of the Israelites, the Judges were their governors, and afterwards the *Kingly* office succeeded, and has continued to this day. St. Paul, we find, enjoins supplication, &c. to be made for Magistrates and all in authority, not from any worldly motives, but as he knew it could alone secure to him the happiness of another and a better state. He had often been arrested, and confined by them in prison—he had often been brought before their tribunal—he had
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been beaten, and received by their order. "forty stripes, save one," and yet exhorts us to pray for them. A fine lesson this for all not only to obey, but likewise to pray for all those, who are in authority, in sincerity, and truth. But is there, in our day, any necessity for enjoining, and exhorting men "to pay a due obedience to *Kings*, and all who are in authority?" Is there any need of exhorting them to make supplications for them? Would to God, beloved, there was no need of such injunction, but that mankind would follow the advice of the Apostle, in the words of my text!

There has, however, unhappily appeared in our day a spirit of opposition to this exhortation of the Apostle, and men have dared to break through, to violate, nay even to abolish all laws, human and divine, but such as the depravity of their own hearts, and the fanaticism of their own weak understandings, have formed, for the sake of furthering their wicked and base designs. Let us only turn our eyes for a moment to a neighbouring Kingdom---the picture is too dreadful long to dwell upon it---they have "despised dominion"---they have "spoken evil of dignities"---they have murdered their *King* and *Queen*---they have abolished all appearance of religion---and "they have" literally "sold themselves to work wickedness." But can their depravity affect us? Can their evils injure our peace? Can their practices endanger our comforts? Yes, beloved, whilst we have those amongst us, who, like the lurking assassin, are only waiting for an opportunity to murder our comforts, to destroy our happiness, and our very life. But is it possible to find such wretches? Are there any amongst *Britons*, who thus wish to introduce anarchy,

anarchy, confusion, disorder, poverty, misery, and ruin? Yes, there are men, who call themselves Britons, but who have lost every part of the *true* Briton but the form; and (I blush to say it) there have been those, who called themselves Ministers of the Gospel, who preached, and taught these atheistical and infernal tenets and principles, making a cloak of religious zeal to cover their depravity of intention; that they might aim the surer blow---they, however, have obtained their reward!

Let us not, however, be drawn aside by their specious delusions, but let us endeavour to prove,

Thirdly, How making Supplications, &c. will secure to us a quiet and peaceable life, begetting in us all godliness, and honesty.

In every thing, that has life, whether man, animal, vegetable, or mineral, there is a successive degree of order, which, if once injured, or destroyed, must render the whole not only confused, but useless and hurtful. Amongst men there is this successive order, not only as to *bodily* strength and form, but also as to the capacities, understandings, and endowments of the *mind*. When man, therefore, walks, speaks, and acts, according to that degree, in which the divine providence of the Lord hath placed him, he then walks, speaks, and acts according to divine order, which alone can make him happy, either here or hereafter. Should the feet say to the head, I will rule; should the limbs say to the tongue, I will speak; this would be contrary to the respective qualities and properties of each; the consequence of which would be, that the whole must fall, and perish together. Should the head, however, bear rule;

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should the feet discharge their proper office ; should the tongue speak, and the limbs perform their regular and constant action, nothing but unity would prevail, nothing but comfort and happiness be established. Just so it is with respect to the government, rule, dominion, and authority of this outward world. *Kings, Rulers, Governors*, and the like, are as essentially necessary for the preservation, comfort, and happiness of the world, as the *head* is necessary for the security, guidance, and direction of the whole *body* ; inasmuch as, whilst men are in a state of no subordination and subjection ; whilst every one considers himself entitled to the same blessings, and in the same proportion as his neighbour, without having ability, or capacity, to understand and enjoy them, no moral duties can be attended to, and consequently no spiritual satisfactions received.

Peace is the sure consequence of every one knowing, keeping, and considering himself happy in, and best qualified for, that state, in which he is placed. Peace, therefore, can only dwell, where perfect order, harmony, and love unite ; where contentment, where gratitude, where thankfulness exist, and have their abode. It is such a desire of peace as this alone, that can fit us for the reception of godliness ; for the enjoyment of the Divine Redeemer, and his eternal love and truth. It is such a desire of peace as this alone, that can "make man mild and sociable with man ;" that can make us to dwell in safety ; and can render us, like our Lord himself, who is emphatically called "*The Prince of Peace*." Let us now,

Lastly, Consider, that such a life alone "is good, and acceptable to God our Saviour."

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We all know, that nothing is good, but what partakes of the nature of God ; and that every thing is only so far acceptable to him, as it is, according to its power of receiving, *filled with his fullness*. Now we are sure, that confusion, that discord, that enmity, divisions, and the like, do not partake of his nature ; therefore, they can have no conjunction, with, or be any way acceptable, to him. To those, however, who are desirous of peace, who wish nothing more earnestly than that order, humanity, purity, and love may be preserved, he pronounces a blessing, when he says, “ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall inherit the earth.” Sin is nothing but a perversion, and abuse of the divine order.—It would establish upon its foundation, what never had any being at all. Let us each of us, for ourselves, look into our own hearts, and judge for ourselves. Whence arises all our misery ? Does it not proceed from a desire of ruling over others, from the lust of dominion, from an improper love of the world, and from loving ourselves more than God ? Doubtless, beloved, this is the case---doubtless this is the source of all our misery ! We will not suffer the Lord to reign over us ; but think we are able to govern the world, when alas ! short sighted as we are ! we are not able to govern our own families, nay our own tempers, and our own actions.----This is not, cannot be “ acceptable to God our Saviour ;” inasmuch as it originates from beneath, and is in itself, sin, confusion, misery, and death.

To conclude. In times, like the present, when artful, wicked, and designing men are endeavouring, by vague, and artful insinuations, to make others dissatisfied, and uneasy with their condition ; when

others, yet more daring, openly aver their wishes, and declare their intentions, it is a duty incumbent upon every sincere *lover* of his *God*, every faithful *subject* of his *King*, and *well-wisher* to his *country*, his family, himself, and friends, to discountenance, and resist every attempt to introduce the same miseries, which our neighbours are suffering. *Revolutions*, like the present, speak for themselves. They bring with them every *outward trouble*; they are destitute of every *inward satisfaction*, having their foundation in Atheism, Infidelity, Dishonesty, Rapine, Fraud, Murder, and all its attendant train of woes. It is often supposed, that these disturbances have arisen from outward circumstances; but believe me, beloved, they originate and flow from a different source. They are only the *external manifestations*, or signs of that *inward depravity* of heart, of will, of affection, and misguided reason and understanding, which are the proper elements of that fallen life, in which the powers of darkness work, and fix their abode. Let us only keep our minds free from such specious pretences, and we shall be able to do what is "good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

Whenever we pray to the father of mercies, let us not pray only for ourselves; but let us always remember "to make prayers and supplications for *Kings*, and for all, that are in authority;" let us be thankful, that we are under the government of so good a *King*, as the present. Let us not form to ourselves imaginary distresses, lest by seeking to remove them, we bring upon ourselves real sorrows. Let us be *true* to our *God*, *faithful* to our *King*, obedient to all in authority under him, that we may be peaceable, happy, and good, and merit the approbation

probation of our God. Let us not shrink in times of apparent danger. Let us openly shew our affectionate attachment and duty to every commandment of the Lord, respecting those, who rule over us; let no sinister motives urge us on to a bare pretension, but let our intentions be upright, our zeal operative, and our love sincere. Let me, therefore, beloved, in the language of my text, "exhort," and persuade you, "that first of all, Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all men, for Kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, knowing, that this alone is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

* "And O Almighty, and ever-blessed God, whose kingdom is everlasting and power infinite, have mercy upon the whole church, and so rule the heart of thy chosen servant George, our King, and Governor, that he, knowing whose minister he is, may above all things seek thy honor and glory, and that we, and all his subjects, duly considering whose authority he hath, may faithfully serve, honor, and humbly obey him, in thee and for thee, according to thy blessed word, and ordinance, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

SERMON

* Collect for the King In the Communion Service.

SERMON XVIII.

ST. JOHN, Chap. iv. Ver. 24.

"GOD IS A SPIRIT, AND THEY, THAT WORSHIP HIM,
MUST WORSHIP HIM, IN SPIRIT, AND IN TRUTH."

OUR Lord, having "left Judea, and travelled again into Galilee, came to a city of Samaria, where was a well, called Jacob's Well." Fatigued with his journey, "he sat down by the side of it; and it was about the sixth hour, when a woman came, thither to draw water; Jesus saith unto her, give me to drink." The question was natural. She, however, surprized at his request, said, "How is it, that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan; for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." Nothing discouraged at her refusal, he replieth, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is, that saith to thee, Give me drink, thou wouldest have asked of him; and he would have given thee Living Water." Poor, helpless, ignorant, and weak! She saw not the comfort of this friendly offer, this kind invitation, but with artless simplicity, which cannot but excite our compassion, enquired, how he could procure this "Living Water; because the well was deep, and he had no vessel to draw withal." He tells her, the water, which she drew, would only allay her natural thirst for a time, and then

then perish ; but that " the water, which he gave, would be in her a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." He next desires her to call her husband ; but upon her informing him she had no husband, he commends her veracity, when he says, " Thou hast well said, I have no husband : for thou hast had five husbands ; and he, whom thou now hast, is not thy husband : in that saidst thou truly." The woman, more astonished than before, exclaims, " Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet ;" and then doubtingly enquires, how, and where God could be truly worshipped, when she says, " Our Fathers worshipped in this mountain ; but ye say, that at Jerusalem men ought to worship." He, however, to satisfy her doubts, acquaints her, that mere local situations were of no avail ; for that " neither in Mount Gerizim, nor yet at Jerusalem would the father hereafter be worshipped aright ; but that the true worshipper would worship aright in spirit, and in truth," in the temple of his own heart ; for " God is a spirit, and they, that worship him, must worship him in spirit, and in truth."

Oh ! what a faithful picture of unregenerate nature is here held up to our view ; and how benevolent and kind doth the GREAT REDEEMER appear, in that gentle, easy, and mild manner, in which he revealeth, and discovereth himself unto us ! By the woman of Samaria is beautifully represented to us, that affection of natural truth and light, which is at best but darkness and ignorance, without the " true light," and truth, the manifested Redeemer, Jesus Christ. By the Lord's asking her to " give him to drink" is pointed out that affable, and loving manner, in which the Lord solliciteth, and requesteth the giving

giving up our own selfish knowledge, wisdom, and will, to his heavenly wisdom, purity, and love.---No compulsion on the part of God!--No arbitrary act, or irresistible obligation--No indispensable necessity, or unavoidable obedience.---Free, as the breath of air, is the human will---Boundless, as eternity, is the divine mercy---All solicitation, and sweet encouragement---All kind invitation, and blessed promise, where it is written, "Come unto me, all ye, that labour, and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest: For my yoke is easy, and my burthen light." All strong incentive, and sure reward---"To him, that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the garden of the paradise of God."---"It was about the sixth hour"---Happy state for the reception of spiritual information, and gospel comfort---Days, in scripture, signify states of regeneration; and hours the different degrees of those states. Six days, are man's various states of temptation, trial, and suffering---The Seventh, or Sabbath, is his deliverance from the powers of darkness, and his full enjoyment of divine life, and love.---"It was about the sixth hour"---She was in the affection of natural truth, but in the last period of that state; and therefore in a suitable condition to become acquainted with the nature of spiritual truth, and worship. The water she drew, by which is signified natural truth, and knowledge derived therefrom, would not allay a spiritual thirst: "Living Water," that is, spiritual truth, and heavenly wisdom derived therefrom, which the Lord alone can bestow, will be *in us* a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." She had had "five husbands; but he, whom she then had, was not her husband;" that is, she had lived heretofore in a merely natural faith and natural truth,

truth, in a merely natural light, and knowledge, knowing, and believing in, God only with a natural knowledge, and natural faith; but was now desirous, though ignorant of the way, to attain spiritual wisdom, and divine faith, and therefore happily disposed to converse with, and to be edified by, the Lord Jesus Christ, her "spiritual Rock," and the "eternal fountain of living waters." Jesus tells her, however, that God can be worshipped aright then, and then only, when he is "worshipped in spirit, and in truth;" not in love alone, or in truth alone, ---for St. Paul speaks of some, "who held the truth in unrighteousness"---but in love and truth conjoined, and united in one holy bond, and marriage, and producing the fruits of an holy life, and faithful obedience to the divine commandments.

Let me, therefore, bespeak your most serious attention, whilst I endeavour to point out to you the nature of that worship, which is acceptable to God; and what are some of the many reasons, why so few worship him aright, "in spirit, and in truth."

Let it be well observed, then, that man has a three-fold nature, life, and principle, a sensual, or an earthly nature, a natural, or rational faculty, and a spiritual, or divine principle. The two first may be properly called our own, which we brought with us into the world; the last, which was opened for us, and made attainable by us, through the unutterable love, mercy, redeeming power, and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The sensual, and earthly nature is that, which we have in common with the beasts, that perish; and which, being rooted and grounded in the love of this world, and the flesh, is ever hungering,

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and thirsting after its own proper food, support, and nourishment, which the Apostle informs us is "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Whilst these, and such like evils as these, are the daily meat, on which man feedeth, and liveth, he daily inverteth the order of heaven and its delights, and introduceth into his whole frame misery, and death; by loving this world more than heaven, himself better than God, and the things of time before those of eternity. The natural, or rational faculty is that, wherein man is superior to the beasts, that perish; and whereby he is capable of thinking, and reasoning; of weighing actions, and their tendency; and thus able to chuse, either life, or death, blessedness, or misery, heaven, or hell for his everlasting portion. When the sensual, or earthly nature is kept in subjection by the natural, or rational faculty, will and understanding go hand in hand, obedience, and its reward are united together, sweets, and comforts bloom around, and a further opening is made for our entrance into, our growth, and advancement in, and our satisfaction from, the purer delights of a spiritual, and divine life. In a spiritual state alone we can offer spiritual worship; in a spiritual state alone we can "worship God in spirit, and in truth;" inasmuch as then the spiritual principle rules, the rational faculty is a faithful servant, and the sensual nature is entirely extinguished, and destroyed.

"To worship God in spirit, and in truth," is to have an inward sensibility of our own weakness, and the strength, and ability of the divine power. "To worship God in spirit, and in truth" is to die to every selfish,

selfish, carnal, and worldly principle, affection, and desire." To worship God in spirit, and in truth," is to cultivate and improve, through the Divine Blessing, and assistance, every sweet, amiable, and Divine Communication; to profit by every visitation of the great lover of souls, and to attend with humble simplicity, and godly sincerity to every call, every opening, and every manifestation of truth and goodness in the dark, and benighted heart. This is what is called in scripture, REGENERATION," or a "NEW BIRTH," a "NEW MAN," the "REDEEMED Nature," the "BORN OF GOD;" and its fruits, by which it is known, and with which it is always accompanied, are enumerated by the Apostle, as being "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance and charity." Wherever, therefore, we behold these heavenly fruits; wherever we observe these emanations of divine truth, and love; wherever we find these manifestations of a superior wisdom, and understanding, there, and there alone, we see the true worshipper, who "worshippeth the Father in spirit, and in truth."

Such is the nature of true spiritual worship, and such the blessed influence and effect thereof upon the heart and life of the faithful and true worshipper. Much, it is to be feared, however, that few are thus worshipping aright: Much, it is to be feared, that few, very few, are thus opening their eyes, and their hearts to the light, and knowledge, to the love of, and obedience to, the GREAT REDEEMER, and his heavenly laws; whilst thousands, on the other hand, are continually worshipping, and offering perpetual incense at some unhallowed altar, to some unhallowed God.

You cannot surely be weak enough, however, to suppose, that the change from darkness to light, from nature to spirit, from death to life is so easy, and that it will cost you little labour and trouble! You cannot surely be weak enough to imagine, that the way to heaven is strewn with roses and flowers, with sweets and comforts only!—No, poor helpless mortal! many a worldly temper must be subdued—many a darling passion must be sacrificed—many a right hand must be cut off—many a right eye must be plucked out—many a victory must be obtained over the world, the flesh, and the devil, before thy will is brought into subjection—before patience hath wrought her perfect work—before thy simplicity is like that of a little child—before thy humility is like that of thy Redeemer—before thy love is pure—thy faith immoveable—thy obedience unfeigned—thy charity universal—before “the same mind is in thee, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Till the soul is shaken to her very centre—till thou art fully and experimentally convinced of the insufficiency of all earthly comforts to make thee happy—till thou askest in humble prayer for that “water, which springeth up unto everlasting life,” thy REDEEMER cannot manifest himself as a SAVIOUR; nor can the heart be lifted up to “worship God in spirit, and in truth,” till it has first become humble, and meek, and lowly, and poor in its own eyes. Through this suffering process the human nature must be exalted—through these temptations the spirit must pass—through such afflictions it must be purified—inasmuch as “to the poor in spirit” alone the promises are made—“to the poor in spirit” alone the benefits can be applied—“to the poor in spirit” alone
belongeth

belongeth the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life."

Why, then, do you refuse so "great salvation?"

Why do you "love darkness rather than light?" Why

do ye "spend your money for that, which is not

bread; and your labour for that, which satisfieth

not?" Have you no desire to be happy--no inclina-

tion to be good--no wish to dwell with God? Do

you covet misery, darkness, and death? Oh! re-

member the goodness of your God! Think, oh!

think, and adore the continuance of his forbearance,

long-suffering, and mercy, which would lead you to

repentance!---Remember---blessed, yet awful tid-

ings!--Remember you are free---Remember the grand

charter of an indulgent heaven to fallen man---Re-

member, thou mayest have life, and life eternal---

Thy own choice alone can make thee miserable, or

happy to all eternity. Thy God is now waiting to

manifest himself unto thee. He is waiting at the

door of thine heart, and often knocketh for admis-

sion: "Behold I stand at the door, and knock."

Wouldest thou treat an earthly King, or Prince with

the same indifference, and insult? Wouldest thou

not lay aside every other business, and open thy door

for his admission, and think thyself honoured and

blessed by such a condescending visit? How much

rather then shouldest thou open the door of thy

heart to the "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords;"

who calleth, not as an occasional visitant, or the

guest of an hour, but as a constant friend to dwell

and abide with thee for ever and ever. Ah! turn

him not away----Perhaps he may not afford thee

another opportunity---Perhaps he may knock no

more----Perhaps to-morrow to thee may never,

never

never come. Thy next sleep—may be—the sleep of death—and thy haggard spirit, instead of shining as an angel of light, may mingle with congenial spirits of darkness, misery, and woe! The King of terrors often calls at the door, when the master of the house is by no means prepared for the awful visit! His next arrow may be levelled there—or there—or it may be—here. But are we armed with the panoply of heaven, which alone can resist his fatal arrows? Have we “our loins, girt about with truth?” Have we “put on the breast-plate of righteousness?” Are “our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace?” Have we taken “the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God?” Do we “pray always with all prayer, and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance?” If we are not thus armed with heavenly armour, death will still be the king of terrors to us, and sin retain its sting, because they only can conquer and subdue the powers of darkness, who are strengthened by the nature, and supported by the power of the REDEEMER, and SAVIOUR Jesus Christ.

You have by your bounty, and the blessing of heaven upon your endeavours, erected this * *Structure* for the outward ordinances, and external service of the Lord—But, alas! what will all this avail, if you have not prepared a more acceptable habitation for him, even the temple of your hearts, wherein alone he delighteth to dwell! You may, indeed, join in the outward forms, and ceremonies; you may join with your lips in asking pardon, and forgiveness for past transgressions;

* Preached at the opening of the Church, August 12, 1791.

transgressions; you may make mention of his loving-kindness, and utter songs of thanksgiving and praise; but unless your nature, will, and love be consistent therewith, unless you are endeavouring, through the divine blessing and assistance, to bring forth in your own hearts, and lives, the redeeming fruits of eternal truth, and love, you are not worshipping aright, but are deceiving your own souls by “offering up the sacrifice of fools.”

Religion, or the true worship of God, is nothing but the entire surrender of our wills to the guidance, government, providence, and direction of the divine will. When this is once effected, the blessed union will then be completed; we shall then be all meekness, humility, and love; and instead of being worshippers of our own ungodly lusts, we shall be enabled to “worship God in spirit, and in truth.”

May we all seriously think of these things! May we make a proper use of the means, wherewith the Lord hath furnished us, in order to make us happy, that, when these our earthly tabernacles are dissolved, we may “worship God in spirit, and in truth,” in his own celestial kingdom of everlasting life, and love.

And O Holy, and Merciful Jesus! Thou Author, and Bestower of every good, and perfect gift, enable us by thy Almighty power to subdue every inordinate affection and principle, which would separate us from thee, and from thy kingdom. Let thy holy love, thy fervent charity, thy spotless purity, thy patient suffering, thy uncomplaining meekness, thy perfect life, and thy whole nature be the study,

study, and delight of our whole lives: May we, at humble distance, endeavour to copy after so fair a pattern, so bright an original; that, treading thus in thy steps, and walking in thy paths, we may, by beholding the poverty of nature, be led to hunger after, and feed upon that "bread of life, which came down from heaven," and to thirst after, and drink of, that "living water, which will be in us a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." Thus walking, not in our own strength, but in the fulness of thy power and might, we shall be cleansed and delivered from all our defilements; we shall become holy, as thou art holy; pure, as thou art pure; and by thy aid and assistance be enabled to overcome, and keep in subjection, all our spiritual adversaries, Sin, Death, and Hell, to our own comfort, and to thy glory, both now and for ever.

SERMON

S E R M O N XIX.

" 1 COR, Chap. xvi. Ver. 13.

"STAND FAST IN THE FAITH."

THE blessed Apostle having endeavoured; throughout this Epistle, to build up and "confirm" his Corinthian brethren in the Faith; as it is in Christ Jesus; having exhorted them, in the beginning of it, "to lay aside all contention, and having besought them, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they would all speak the same thing, that they would foment no divisions amongst themselves, but that they would be perfectly joined together in the same mind," proceeds, by a variety of heavenly rules, and doctrine, to point out to them the blessedness of living a life of "charity" and love, inasmuch as without this spirit all their knowledge would profit them nothing. In the conclusion, he entreats them, to "stand fast in the Faith," subjoining this heavenly exhortation, "let all your things be done with charity."

As if he had said, "I have laboured with un-
"ceasing care to impart to you the abundant
"riches of Jesus Christ; I have endeavoured to
"lay a sure foundation, which cannot be moved;

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"being

" being with you in weakness, and in fear, and in
 " much trembling ; and having my speech, and
 " my preaching, not with enticing words of man's
 " wisdom, but in demonstration of the *spirit* and
 " of *power* ; that your Faith should not stand
 " in the *wisdom* of *men*, but in the *power* of GOD."
 " In this Faith I earnestly entreat you to abide,
 " quitting yourselves like men, and being strong
 " herein ; and as a proof of your abiding in, and
 " adhering to such a Faith, let all your things be
 " done with charity ;" inasmuch as * " charity is
 " the very Bond of Peace, and of all virtues, and
 " without it, whosoever liveth is counted dead be-
 " fore the Lord ;" and he himself hath declared,
 " hereby shall all men know that ye are my disci-
 " ples, if ye have love one towards another."

Such was the import and meaning of St.
 Paul's exhortation to his Corinthian " Church."
 He knew how difficult it would be for them to
 continue stedfast, when so much persecuted by the
 Jews, and how difficult it would be to prevent
 them giving up their living Faith in the Redeemer,
 and returning to their own barren and dead forms.
 In our day, there is the same need of advising and
 exhorting to continue, or to " stand fast, in the
 Faith," as there was in St. Paul's time of old.
 Much hath been said about Faith, " and standing
 fast therein ;" but, alas ! not with that purity of
 intention, and that desire of usefulness, which pro-
 duced the heavenly exhortation of the blessed
 Apostle ; inasmuch as your " standing fast in the
 Faith" is unhappily explained to signify, your
 abiding in and attending a particular Place of Wor-
 ship,

* Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday.

ship, without having any of those living characters, by which a true and lively Faith is known and acknowledged. Suffer me then, with all Christian tenderness, and charity, to warn and advise you, to "take heed, how ye hear,"—it is a duty, which I owe to you, to myself, and to my God and your God. Suffer me to prevail upon you, to pay all possible heed and attention to so interesting and important a matter; inasmuch as your everlasting happiness dependeth upon your right apprehension, and sure possession, of this true Faith.

"Stand fast in the Faith," saith the blessed Apostle.—Doubtless, he had before endeavoured to explain to them, what that Faith was, in which they were to stand; for how could they believe, except they had heard?—"how could they hear, except they had a preacher? and how could he preach, except he was sent?" Let us, therefore, follow his example, and, before we exhort to "stand fast in the Faith," let us enquire,

First, What "Faith is;" and,

Secondly, Whether we are "in the Faith, or no; or, in the words of the same Apostle, in his 2d Epistle to the same "Church," "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the Faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."

Let us then, first, enquire, what "Faith is."

It hath, indeed, unhappily been supposed by some, and such supposition hath been encouraged,

that by "Faith" we are to understand our oral Creed, or Belief; or that "Faith" is only a verbal assent, or consent, to certain forms of words, which, alas! are useless, which have no virtue, efficacy, or power in them, but so far only as they proceed from the ground of an heart, influenced with divine love, and endued with power from on high. The "Faith" here spoken of, however, hath a deeper root, and ground, than that above mentioned—It is such a Faith as the woman had, to whom our Lord said, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy Faith hath made thee whole: go in peace."—It is such a Faith as the centurion had, when he said, "Say, in a word, and my servant will be healed." It is such a Faith, as the Redeemer meant, when he said to the ruler, "Fear not; believe only, and she will be made whole"—It is such a Faith, as the Lord signified, when he said, "If ye had Faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you might say unto this sycamine tree, be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you"—It is such a Faith, as the Redeemer described, and the blessed fruits and effects whereof he mentioned, when he said, "And these signs will follow them, that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and the sick shall recover" It is such a Faith, as St. Paul meaneth, when he saith, "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but Faith, that worketh by love"—In short, it is such a Faith as St. John meaneth, when he saith, "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the

the victory, that overcometh the world, even our Faith."

Faith, then, is nothing less, than the surrendering up of the whole will unto God—it is nothing less, than the giving up of all, and following Christ in the regeneration. The carnal mind, which is in a state of bondage to this world, and the flesh, cannot see into the beauty, order, and blessedness of this divine Faith; inasmuch as all its conceptions, being immersed in earth, and earthly objects, partake of the same earthly nature with itself. This is the reason of our inability to "overcome the world;" for, whilst we have Faith in this world; whilst we consider all our happiness to be placed here below; whilst our hearts remain "over-charged with the cares of this world;" we cannot have "Faith in God." Under such clouds, and overwhelmed with such delusions, no wonder, that our short-sighted reason cannot see, or comprehend, how trouble and uneasiness can be the only inlets to rest, and peace, and darkness, and death, the only prelude to light, and life. Let us, however, seriously enquire into these truths, and endeavour to prove, how "Faith in God overcometh the world."

By "the World" we may justly undersand, whatever is out of, separate from, and unconnected with, the heavenly world, and kingdom; or whatever hath lost all those healing qualities, and properties, which constitute the kingdom of our Lord. It is for this reason, that "the world" is called a "vale of tears"—it is for this reason, we are told, that

that "we have here no abiding city; but should seek one above, whose maker, and builder is God." The world we have to overcome, therefore, is that only, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish---the world we are to seek is heavenly, spiritual, and divine. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that the struggle between two such opposite natures, worlds and kingdoms must be very great---many afflictions must be endured---many obstacles must be removed---many temptations must be resisted before that victory is obtained, by which we are enabled to "overcome the world." Let us not, however, be discouraged, since "he, who hath promised, is faithful;" and St. James saith, "Let him, that asketh, ask in faith, without wavering; for he, that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed; and let not such a man think, that he shall receive any thing from the Lord."

Having taken this view of the nature, marks, and characters of a true faith; let us now follow the Apostle's advice, and enquire,

Secondly, Whether we be in the faith, or no; inasmuch as it is written, "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith."

The words, indeed, are few, but they are weighty, and important: The answer is short, but it is pointed, and searching; "know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" The blessed Apostle doth not direct us to any learned divine---he doth not direct us to pore over any mysterious comments, or laboured explanations of the holy word---he knew sufficiently well

well the weakness of all outward things, and their inability to convince us of these truths---he directeth us, therefore, to ourselves, to the volume of our own hearts, there to read, and contemplate our will, our love, our inclinations, our affections, and desires; and thence to inform ourselves of a certainty, whether we are in the faith, or no; As if he had said;

“ Examine well, and carefully, O man, and look
 “ into the volume of thine own heart; for thou wilt
 “ there find sufficient to acquit, or condemn thee,
 “ Search every corner of thy will; examine thy
 “ affections; try all the hidden, and secret springs of
 “ thy actions, and see, whether they flow from a
 “ pure, or a polluted fountain. Enquire, and be
 “ assured, whether thou hast given up all self-love,
 “ hatred, revenge, and every other diabolical tem-
 “ per. Prove thyself, and confess, whether ‘ the
 “ Lord Jesus Christ be in thee, or whether thou art
 “ separated from him.’ Learn, whether thou art
 “ united to him by that tie of meekness, patience,
 “ humility, resignation, and ‘ innocency of life,’
 “ which is ‘ the true Lamb of God, that taketh away
 “ the sins of the world.’ Be not over hasty in de-
 “ termining, but ‘ try every spirit, whether it be of
 “ God;’ inasmuch as thine eternal interests are at
 “ stake. If thou hast given up every earthly affec-
 “ tion---if thou hast ceased to fix any dependence,
 “ and faith, upon this world, and its visionary forms,
 “ ---if thou art determined, through the power of
 “ thy Redeemer, to be ‘ crucified unto the world’---
 “ if meekness---if charity---if love divine be thy
 “ life---‘ if the same mind be in thee, which was
 “ also in Christ Jesus’---then thou mayest be faith-
 “ fully convinced, that ‘ Jesus Christ is in thee, and
 “ that

“ that thou art no reprobate, but that thy life is hid
 “ with Christ in God.”

Such seems to have been the meaning of the Apostle, when he said, “ Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves : know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates ?

Vain, and useless it would be for me, to give you any other advice than this ! Vain, and useless it would be, to exhort you to “ stand fast in any faith, but this !” What, however, is your faith ? or rather, have you any faith at all ? Is your’s a “ faith, that worketh by love ?” or is it only an oral, barren, and dead faith ? Have you, by it, been enabled to overcome yourselves, and the world ? If this be the case ; I adjure you by the Lord Jesus, to “ stand fast in this faith !” If not ; I intreat you, with all tenderness, to labour after this precious, this inestimable treasure. “ Faith, indeed, is the gift of God ;” but it is a gift, which he giveth liberally to all, “ that ask of him.” Labour, then, by humble, and earnest prayer, to acquire this blessing. Remember, that thy faith entirely dependeth upon the surrender of thy will to the will of thy Redeemer. Remember, and endeavour to feel experimentally, the full, and inward sense of thy daily prayer, where it is written, “ Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Trust not to an oral confession, and acknowledgment of any verbal creed alone for salvation ; but know, assuredly, that there is no way, whereby thou mayest, or canst, have “ faith in God,” but by living a life conformable to his blessed will, and pleasure. To those, who have attained this humble, this believing
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state of soul, I address myself in the words of my text, but to them only, " Watch ye ; stand fast in the faith ; quit you like men ; be strong ; and let all your things be done with charity ;" or as the Apostle saith in another place, " Let us hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering ; and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and good works." Be not discouraged, though persecution, and slanders, surround you on every side. Expect every possible opposition from the devil, the world, and the flesh. Guard against every appearance of evil ; and follow the example of your Redeemer, who, " when he was reviled, reviled not again ; and when he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet opened not his mouth." " Though they curse, yet bless ye, and commit your cause to him, that judgeth righteous judgment, and trieth the very heart, and reins." Thus will you ever " stand," with God on your side, " fast in the true faith ;" and, by keeping malice from your hearts, and a bridle upon your lips, you will gain a complete conquest over your greatest enemies, Sin, Death, and Hell, and be admitted to the possession, and enjoyment, of a blessed reward, which the Lord hath promised, where he saith, " Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." To those, who have not obtained this heavenly blessing, this useful part of the Pilgrim's armour in the christian warfare, I would earnestly recommend every possible endeavour faithfully to " commit the keeping of their souls to his care, who careth for them," fully relying upon his providence, implicitly depending upon his goodness, and confidently believing in, both his power, and willingness, to remove their

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unbelief,

unbelief, and want of faith, when they earnestly desire it of him.

And, O Merciful, and Compassionate Jesus, enliven, by thy power, the dulness, and deadness of our faith. May we not be "hearers" only, but "doers of thy word;" and thus be led to find, to feel, and know, by a blessed experience, that we "stand fast in the faith;" and that "all things are possible to him, that believeth."

SERMON

SERMON XX.

ACTS, Chap. ix, Ver. 3, 4, 5, 6.

"AND AS HE JOURNEYED, AND CAME NEAR DAMASCUS, SUDDENLY THERE SHINED ROUND ABOUT HIM A LIGHT FROM HEAVEN. AND HE FELL TO THE EARTH, AND HEARD A VOICE SAYING UNTO HIM, SAUL, SAUL, WHY PERSECUTEST THOU ME? AND HE SAID, WHO ART THOU, LORD? AND THE LORD SAID, I AM JESUS, WHOM THOU PERSECUTEST: IT IS HARD FOR THEE TO KICK AGAINST THE PRICKS. AND HE, TREMBLING, AND ASTONISHED, SAID, LORD, WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO? AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, ARISE, AND GO INTO THE CITY, AND IT SHALL BE TOLD THEE, WHAT THOU MUST DO."

MANY and various, yet always consistent with the regular and usual course of his divine providence, have been the methods, in all ages, and in all states of the Church, whereby the God of unutterable love, and mercy, hath manifested his goodness, in bringing fallen, lost and sinful man, to an acquaintance with himself. Seldom, however, will man allow himself time to consider of, or the use of his reason to weigh, the infinite value of such heavenly visitations, but, "like the deaf adder, stoppeth his ear to the melodious voice of the Divine charmer, charm he never so wisely." Blessed, however, be the Lord of love, who will not leave us to the blind impulses of our own cor-

rupt and fallen nature, nor leave us, and forsake us, though we turn our backs upon him, and "desire not the knowledge of his laws." Blessed be the Lord of all spirits, who still pursueth us with overtures of mercy—still laboureth to awaken in us some sensibility of our own misery—still endeavoureth, by a process of the most seemingly opposite and contrary circumstances, and occurrences, to raise in us a desire of being rescued from our oppressor, and enjoying sweet reconciliation, and communion with him! Such appears to have been the manner of his dealing with the blessed Apostle, whose deep conviction, and consequent conversion, we are informed of in the words of my text.

St. Paul, as he himself acquaints us, was one of the most zealous of all those, who persecuted the Church of Christ, the disciples of a crucified Redeemer. He was well acquainted with the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God; but it was a "zeal, which was not according to true knowledge." He had received a commission from the high priest and elders, to go down to Damascus, where was a small company of disciples, and "to bring bound to Jerusalem whomsoever he should find calling upon the Redeemer's name."—Poor, misguided Paul!—little didst thou then understand, how much thou wast opposing the gracious designs of that Lord, and Redeemer, whose cause thou wast afterwards so desirous of serving!—Little didst thou expect, that thou wouldst be enabled to see, and to find thyself in so ignorant, so dark, and so lost a condition—without light—without knowledge—without any consolation, to cheer thy fallen spirits!—

spirits!—Little didst thou expect thy “pharisaical zeal” to be so soon abated—thy fortitude so soon overcome—thy threatnings, and slaughter, to be turned into fear, and confusion.—Damascus, where thou wast journeying, to bind the servants of the Lord, was soon to be the place, where thou wouldst openly espouse the cause of thy Redeemer, whom thou wast persecuting, and preach his gospel to a benighted world!—for, “as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.” Let us take the words, as they stand, and endeavour to open their internal, and spiritual sense in as plain, easy, and familiar a manner, as possible; not forgetting, that they relate to us, as well as to St. Paul of old.

It is not improbable, but St. Paul, and his companions might entertain each other on the road, with an account of the opinions, and doctrines of this new sect, which had given such uneasiness to the high priest, and elders. It is not improbable, but they might represent them, as a deluded people, as objects rather suitable to excite their pity, and compassion, than to raise their resentment and cruelty.—Paul was not an irreligious man—he was not a wilful violator of any known law—he was not a wicked, and abandoned character—let us hear his own confession, and let him speak for himself; when he saith, “I am verily a man, which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up, in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was *zealous towards God*, as ye all are this day;” and in another place, “My manner of life from my youth, which was, at the first, among mine own nation, at Jerusalem,

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know all the Jews ; which knew from the beginning (if they would testify) that, after the *straitest sect of our religion*, I lived a Pharisee ;” and again, speaking before Ananias, and the council, he saith, “ Men and Brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day.” If such, therefore, was his character, and principles, we may naturally conclude, that they reasoned much, on their journey, concerning religion, the nature of the divine commandments, and the charity, which they inculcated. In the midst of these reasonings and reflections, “ suddenly a light shined round about them from heaven.”---What “ light shined from heaven ?”---The light of heaven is a spiritual light, and is the divine truth, and heavenly wisdom from the Lord.---What light, then, could shine, but the blessed light, and evidence, of divine truth, beaming in, with glorious splendor, upon his darkened sight, and vision, his human wisdom, and his human knowledge ? Wherever this divine light appears, it opens, and unveils the hitherto hidden, and secret recesses of the soul, pointing out its deformity and depravity, with which it was unacquainted before. And whence, but from heaven, can such light proceed ?---Paul had long been acquainted with “ the law and the prophets ;” but till that blessed time, their inward meaning had remained to him unopened ; and he had known them only as “ a sealed book, and a dead letter.” No sooner, however does he behold the light, but he “ fell to the earth.”---The divine truth was too powerful for his weak estate. Like Peter of Old, when the Lord was transfigured before him, and like the keepers of the sepulchre, who fell to the earth, and became as dead men for the brightness of his appearing, Paul informeth us, “ he could not see for the
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the glory of that light." By his "falling to the earth" is clearly pointed out to us, how unable human reason, human knowledge, and human wisdom is to bear the brightness of divine truth; and how necessary it is for us gradually, and as we are "able to bear it," to be introduced, and led into the truth, and love, into the knowledge and worship of the Great Redeemer, and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Paul "fell to the earth," and then his ears were opened to the piercing expostulation, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Oh! how awful was this process! ---it was necessary that he should see the light---that truth should be opened in his mind---and then the heart-rending voice exclaimed, "why persecutest thou me?" Such is the first awakening and conviction of the lost soul—it must see its malady, before it can be awakened—it must fall to the earth,—feel the weakness of human power, before it can be convinced—it must HEAR THE VOICE, otherwise the light would be of no avail. "And he said, who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks?" Had Paul seen no light, he would have heard no voice—if he had heard no voice, nor listened and attended to its language, he would have made no enquiry, who it was that spake unto him—but he saw the light—he fell to the earth—he heard the voice—he enquired who it was, and then received this cutting answer, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest:"

As if the Lord had said, "Ah! Saul! Saul!
 "I have long beheld thy severe, and persecuting
 "spirit against all, who call upon my name---I have
 "long observed, how thou hast triumphed in the
 "blood

" blood of my faithful servants.---I beheld thee con-
 " senting to the death of my beloved Martyr Ste-
 " phen.---I saw thee guarding the raiment of those,
 " that slew him---and now, even now, thou wast
 " journeying to Damascus, to glut thy savage
 " heart with the pangs, and sufferings of innocent
 " victims, whose only fault, if thou canst call it a
 " fault, hath been to call upon my name, who am
 " their God, and thy God, their Redeemer, their Sa-
 " viour, and thine ! What have they trespassed
 " against thee, that thou shouldest endeavour to take
 " away their life ? They are only desirous of being
 " thankful for blessings, which I have purchased for
 " them---and wouldest thou prevent their paying the
 " sweet smelling sacrifice of gratitude, and love ?---
 " Remember, that, " whoever afflicteth them, afflict-
 " eth me ; and whoever toucheth them, toucheth
 " the apple of mine eye : "---Cease, therefore, from thy
 " present ungodly spirit.---" It is hard for thee to
 " kick against the pricks".---I have often touched thy
 " heart, but thou wouldest not open it to me.---I
 " have often called, by a variety of means, but thou
 " wouldest not hear.---I have now, last of all, shewed
 " thee my glory and thy own dark estate---it is hard
 " for thee to resist these overtures of love---accept,
 " therefore, my proffered mercy ; inasmuch as I can-
 " not, in thy present carnal state, communicatè my
 " fulness to thee, but thou must remain, unless thou
 " obeyest my voice, in the gall of bitterness, and in
 " the bondage of corruption."

Such, it is evident, was the import of the hea-
 venly voice, and such the sense, in which the Apostle
 understood it ; for " he, trembling, and astonished
 said, Lord ; What wilt thou have me to do ? "

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As if he had said; "I now see the awful situation, in which I stand.---I now see the nature of my transgression.---I now have heard thy voice, which hath told me, that "I have persecuted thee, my Lord, and my God," in persecuting thy disciples.---I now feel the misery, which ever accompanieth a disobedience of thy laws, which inculcate a spirit of forbearance, a spirit of brotherly kindness, charity, and love, even to our enemies. I now behold thine unbounded mercy, who hast thus graciously vouchsafed to shew thy light once more, and to speak once more to a lost sinner, that thou mayest (if possible, and if I will not yet kick against the pricks) prevent me from imbruing my hands a second time in innocent blood!---But---alas!---what avails it, that I see the horrors of my situation!---To remain in my present state, would be worse than death!---To see, and know, and feel, my misery, without some means, by which I may be delivered, is to be doubly cursed!---Something must be done!---To thee, therefore, Blessed Lord, I surrender up myself!---To thee, O merciful Redeemer, I cry for relief!---To thee, O Omnipotent Saviour, I commit my cause!---What, then, wilt thou have me to do?---only speak the word, and thy humbled servant will obey." "Arise," saith the compassionate Jesus. How full of tenderness are these words! Words cannot express, nor language paint, the heart-cheering expression!---"Arise!" Saul, "arise"---be not cast down---I am not thy tormentor, but thy Redeemer, and God---I have shewn thee thy dark estate, that thou mightest see thy danger, and seek, in earnest, the things which belong to thine everlasting peace.---If thou art, indeed, desirous of knowing "what thou must do"---

“arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee, what thou must do.”

Happy Saul! we joyfully exclaim; “what glad tidings” are these! Only “arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee, what thou must do.” But why was he ordered to go into the city? What comfort could he receive from thence? Why did not the Lord himself tell him, what he must do? The Lord directeth every thing according to the regular order of his daily providence—he directs him to “go into the city,” because by “city,” in scripture, is signified the Lord’s church, as where the church is called a “vine-yard, a house, and a city.” To whom, then, could the suffering sinner be directed with so much propriety, as to the Lord’s church, which might instruct, inform, console, and comfort him, being used, as a suitable instrument in the Lord’s hand, fully to unveil to his yet but half-opened understanding the holy word of truth, according to that interesting proof, where we are told, that “Ananias came in, and said unto him, Brother Saul, the Lord, (even Jesus, that appeared unto thee, in the way, as thou camest) has sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be *filled* with the Holy Ghost.”

What love! what tenderness! what ineffable mercy! have we observed in our Lord’s conduct, in the conviction, and subsequent conversion, of the Apostle—*No sudden removal of his burthen—no instantaneous conversion*—all was agreeable to the Lord’s usual and daily conduct, and providence, towards all the children of men—all was gradual, successive, and progressive; and the same Lord, whose divine light shined upon Paul of old, and whose awful
voice

voice expostulated with him, and directed him, how to be delivered from his distress, is daily using the same holy, powerful, and effectual means, to bring about our conviction, and conversion; if we would, but for a moment, open our eyes, and unstop our ears, to the repeated and daily admonitions, and loving calls, of the Great Redeemer. "No scripture is of private interpretation,"—For where is the heart, which hath not, at times, seen this Light, and heard this Voice? Where is the soul, that hath not been often convinced of its defilements by the power of the Divine Truth; and heard a powerful voice exclaiming, "Why persecutest thou me?" Most of us, it is to be feared, belong only to the earthly Jerusalem, and too often take part with the chief priests and rulers, against the true disciples! Most of us, it is to be feared, take part with our carnal and earthly affections, with our own propriety, or self-love, against every humble, and spiritual desire, and love! Most of us, it is to be feared, are journeying, from Jerusalem to Damascus, with our persecuting principles, to bring from thence every divine affection, bound with the cords of sensuality and sin, and to eradicate, as far as in us lies, every vestige, every trace, or mark, of the Lord's church, that is, every degree of seriousness, every holy truth, and doctrine! Blessed, however be that Jesus, whom we are persecuting, that we are yet but on our journey, and not arrived at Damascus!—The divine light now shineth around us—the divine voice now speaketh unto us, by the way.—May we all then, attend to their salutary guidance, and admonitions! If we are journeying to the heavenly Canaan, may "the Lord be a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths;"—If we are travelling to the city of destruction,

tion, " it is high time to awake out of sleep," and to consider, that " the wages of sin is death!" May the Lord, therefore, enable us to make an impartial and true enquiry! May the commemoration of this * Day be the subsequent commemoration of a deep conviction, which may at last be brought, through the Lord's mercy, to a saving conversion!

And, O holy, and compassionate Jesus, may we all be enabled to see thy light, to hear thy voice, to obey thy commandments, and enter into the holy " City," into thy " vineyard," thy church, and household, declaring the wonders, that thou hast done for us, and thankfully acknowledging thy mercies to all the children of men!

* Preached on St. Paul's Day, Jan. 25, 1793. at the anniversary meeting to commemorate the laying of the corner stone of St. Paul's Church.

SERMON

SERMON XXI.

MATT. Chap. xxiii. Ver. 26.

"THOU BLIND PHARISEE, CLEANSE FIRST THAT WHICH IS WITHIN THE CUP, AND PLATTER, THAT THE OUTSIDE OF THEM MAY BE CLEAN ALSO."

IN every age, and in every state of the church since the fall, men have more or less separated themselves from the source of holiness, and purity; and consequently have imbibed a contrary spirit of what is unholy, and impure. The obvious and plain reason of such a change is, because the more they have departed from the love of the Lord, and his heavenly word, and truth, the more they have confirmed themselves in an opposite love of self, or their own propriety, the love of dominion, and the love of the world. An instance of this we have in the conduct of the Scribes, and Pharisees of Old, who, "by their traditions, had made the word of God of none effect; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." They were desirous of appearing righteous before men, but were careless and indifferent how they might be found in the sight of God. They were careful to "pay tithe of mint, and annise, and cummin, but omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." They were careful to "make clean the outside of the cup, and
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of the platter, but within they were full of extortion and excess."

Such appears to have been their state, if we examine the word of truth ; and such, it is to be feared, will appear to be the state of many of us, if we strictly enquire into, and examine the state of our hearts. The Divine Redeemer, however pointed out to them, and still points out to us, the manner of delivering ourselves from this state of impurity and uncleanness in the words of my text, where he says, " Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup, and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

Blind, indeed ! we all of us are, beloved, in our natural state, respecting the things of God, and his eternal kingdom. We have confirmed ourselves in evils and falses of life, and doctrine ; and it is, therefore, our highest interest, and indispensable duty, to remove, through the divine assistance, and blessing, those evils, and falses, which keep us from the enjoyment of good, and the perception of truth, and consequently from conjunction with the Lord.

Having often told you, that the holy scriptures are written by correspondencies, that natural things are representative of things spiritual, I shall endeavour through the divine mercy of the Lord, to point out to you another instance of this kind in the words of my text ; inasmuch as without such an explanation we should deprive the passage of its true meaning, and ourselves of the benefit and usefulness resulting therefrom.

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By the *cup*, and *platter*, mentioned in my text, are plainly meant something more, than a natural cup, and a natural platter ; because it is written in the words preceding my text, " but within they are full of extortion and excess." We all of us know, that a *cup* is intended to hold *drink*, and a *platter* *meat*. Now *meat*, in a spiritual sense, has reference to the *will* of man, and *drink* to his *understanding*. That *meat* has such a signification is plain from the scripture, where it is written, " I have meat to eat, that ye know not of." And again, " My *meat* is to do the *will* of him, that sent me, and to finish his work," That *drink* has also such a signification is plain from the words of the Lord himself, when he said, " If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is, that saith to thee, Give me to *drink*, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee *living water*."

From what has been said it is plain, that by cup and platter is not meant a natural cup, and a natural platter, and by cleansing, a natural cleansing ; but by cup is meant the understanding of man, by platter his will ; and by cleansing first the inside of the cup and platter is meant, a washing and cleansing, and purifying his will, and affections from all evil, and his understanding from all falsehood and error. Beautiful, and heavenly, therefore, is, in this sense, the advice of our Lord to the Pharisees of Old, when he said, " cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

It is obvious to every reasonable mind, how necessary such a process is, in order to man's being regenerated,

regenerated, inasmuch as he is born in all kinds of evil, derived from his parents, which have their abode in his natural man, and which are thus described by the Prophet Isaiah, "The cormorant, and the bittern shall possess him; the owl also, and the raven shall dwell in him; he shall stretch out upon him the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness; and thorns shall come up in his palaces, nettles, and brambles in the fortresses thereof, and he shall be an habitation for dragons, and a court for owls." From this deplorable state of his departure from the Lord, man cannot be delivered and regenerated, but by successive degrees. A tree doth not grow from its seed to its maturity, so as to become a tree, in a single day, but it groweth first from its seed, then from its root, afterwards from its bud, which shooteth out into a stem, from whence branches and leaves proceed, and lastly flowers, and fruits. That man has a power from the Lord of overcoming his natural evils and falses is sufficiently evident; because he hath endued him with the *freedom* of his *will*, by which he is at liberty to admit the divine truth of the Lord into his understanding, and his love into his will, or totally to reject them; which is the reason of our Lord's commanding the Pharisees themselves to "cleanse first the *inside* of the cup and platter, that the *outside* may be clean also."

It is generally supposed at the present day, that if man be in a state of sin, and impurity, he must begin to reform and amend his outward life and actions. Thus, for instance, the man, who has been accustomed to live a life of pleasure, of dissipation, of drunkenness, of excess, ceases from the practice of such things, because they bring with them pain of body,

body, or poverty, or because they are disgusting to those about him. Such a refraining, however, from such excesses, if not grounded upon a better principle, is of no avail in the sight of God ; it may appear to men, it may seem to ourselves, an offering, agreeable to the Lord ; but it will be found at length but a delusive phantom, and an idle dream. Evil must be avoided as it is sinful, and contrary to the divine will ; or we cannot be said to renounce it. The *internal* man, the *heart* must be purified ; every unclean affection must be expelled ; every inordinate desire must be banished, from an aversion to their nature, or we cannot be said to part with, and cast them off ; “ for, from within, out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness : all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” We may be guilty of none of these evil things *externally*, but at the same time we may harbour, and nourish, and love, and cherish them in our *hearts*. How then must we remove such dangerous foes from our household ? How must we overcome such powerful enemies ? How must we subdue these falses and evils, and raise up in their stead, goodness, and truth ? Nothing, beloved, is so easy, when the enquiry is made from a real desire of information, and a resolution, through the divine aid and assistance of complying with the salutary directions. Are you truly sensible that you are living in a state of ignorance, with respect to God ; and his eternal kingdom ? Are you desirous of being taught the way, and means of receiving spiritual comfort, and satisfaction ? Examine the sacred scriptures, and treasure up in your understanding, the truths which

they teach; for *truths* instruct man on whom, and what he ought to believe, and also what he ought to do, and consequently what he ought to will, or desire; for whatsoever a man doth, he doeth it from the will, according to the understanding. Under the guidance and direction of this INFALLIBLE TEACHER, the *word of God*, you will be enabled to unfold, and understand the important truths necessary to salvation. You will there behold the beauty, the order, the harmony, the simplicity, the spirituality of the whole; how necessary it is to part with every thing, which keeps us at a distance from the divine goodness; and how necessary it is to cherish, to cultivate, and to love every amiable, heavenly, and divine affection, which may unite us with the Lord of life, and glory. Man, however, may know, may think, may understand many things, and yet be no better for it, unless the truths, which he treasures up in his understanding, be admitted into the will, and thus become *one*; inasmuch as the understanding, however elevated and enriched by truths, cannot make man spiritual, whilst his will is immersed in, and a slave to, earthly and carnal evils; for so long as the will is not *one* with the understanding, it rejects the rational conclusions of the understanding concerning God, concerning heaven, and eternal life; and assumes such conclusions, as are in agreement with its love, or ruling principle. Let us, therefore, be ever so capable of understanding truths, let us be ever so able to discourse about divine things, yet if the will does not love such truths, and such divine things, and manifest the living power of such truth by an holy obedience thereto, we shall still remain carnal worshippers of ourselves, worshippers of the world, and forgetful of God.

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Having now endeavoured to prove, that by cup is meant the understanding of man, and by platter his will, and how necessary it is that these two should be united, in order to their being useful, since the understanding and will united form one mind, let us now enquire whether we have not need of cleansing our cups and platters, that is, our wills, and understandings, and whether we have not power from the Lord to cleanse them.

If we look into ourselves, beloved, if we examine the ground, from which we find all our actions proceed, we shall in general prove them to be done more from a spirit of this world, and the flesh, than from a spirit of heavenly-mindedness, charity, and love. Selfish, and sensual, we are but too apt to regard ourselves alone, exalting self-love, or propriety, and the love of the world above the love of the Lord; thus inverting the order of our regeneration, and becoming more, and more forms of evil, and partakers of an infernal nature. Who is there amongst us, with whom this is not the case? Who is there amongst us, who is not providing more for the *body*, and its carnal gratifications, and enjoyments, than for the *soul*, and its future immortal, and eternal well-being? Who, amongst us is careful to look into the inmost recesses of his heart, there to find, and banish from himself every inordinate appetite, and affection? Who is there amongst us, who examines the word of truth, that he may be edified thereby, that he may draw from the sacred stream "living water." which may spring up in him unto eternal life? Who is there amongst us, who suffers his will to be guided according to the light of his understanding; thus uniting the two blessed recep-

tacles of life ; thus joining together in spiritual marriage, goodness, and truth ; and admitting the divine love and wisdom of the Lord to influence, guide, and direct all his proceedings ? Few, very few, alas ! it is to be feared, are thus forming in themselves, by the admission of the divine influence, such heavenly, such pure sensibilities ; whilst thousands, on the other hand, are daily admitting the infernal influence of evil, and error, and withdrawing themselves further from the source and fountain of all purity and life, and love ! If such then be the general state of world ; if such be the deplorable condition of most of us, what remains, but that we follow the advice of our blessed Lord in my text, when he says, “ cleanse first the *inside* of the cup and platter, that the *outside* of them may be clean also.”

But here it may be asked, How can I cleanse myself ? How can I remove evil from my will, and error from my understanding ? If I am altogether filthy and unclean ; if I am altogether dead in trespasses and sins ; how can I render myself pure, and clean in the sight of God ? Much has been advanced in favour of such enquiries as these, by those, who affirm, that man hath no part or share in the great work of repentance, reformation, and regeneration. But permit me to inform you, that man has much, very much, to do in this great, and important work. Man has not, indeed, life in himself : The Lord alone hath life in himself, being himself the source, and fountain of all life, light, and love. Man, however, is a recipient of life from the Lord ; and by virtue of his *free-will*, hath power to admit, or shut out, the divine influence of the Lord. He is ever bound to act as from himself, and yet to acknowledge all his power

power or ability to do so, to come from the Lord. The reason of this is, because, though the Lord be always desirous of dwelling in man, he cannot gain admission, till man opens his understanding to the influence of divine truth, and his will to the influence of divine goodness; and thus opens a way for the Lord to enter in and dwell with him, by which conjunction is effected, according to those words of the Lord by St. John, where he says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

How vain then is it for man to say, I cannot cleanse myself; I can do nothing to help myself. Cannot you, beloved, read the word of God? Cannot you thereby try and examine your state and condition? Cannot you thence derive truths, by which your understanding may be enlightened, and your wills renewed? Doubtless you may, if you do but read with sincerity, and attend thereto with diligence and care. It is by the medium of truths and good, which man receives, and which abide with him, that the Lord enters into man; inasmuch as the Lord is in the truths, and good, which man receives, being truth itself, and goodness itself, agreeable to those words, where he says, "He that hath my commandments, and *doeth* them, he it is that loveth me, and I will love him, and make my abode with him."

May we all then, beloved, for ever thank, and adore the divine love, and mercy of the Lord, for this great, and inestimable privilege and benefit! May we all be careful to try, and examine ourselves, by the UNERRING STANDARD of the holy word of God;
 "for

"for the *word* of God is *living*, and *operative*, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts, and intents of the heart." May we all labour to become holy thereby, because it is written, "Make them holy, through thy *truth* : thy *word* is *truth* !" May we root up every evil, and false, and shun them as sins against our God and Redeemer ; thus we shall be enabled to follow the advice of the prophet, where he says, "Wash ye, make you clean : put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes ; cease to do evil, learn to do well," and then, "though our sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

SERMON

SERMON XXII.

HOSEA, Chap. x. Ver. 12.

"SOW TO YOURSELVES IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, REAP IN MERCY; BREAK UP YOUR FALLOW GROUND: FOR IT IS TIME, TO SEEK THE LORD, TILL HE COME, AND RAIN RIGHTEOUSNES UPON YOU."

THESE words of the Prophet Hosea to the rebellious Israelites of old, are so pregnant with instruction, and so generally applicable to mankind at large, that whoever views them in their proper light, will find them particularly applicable to himself, and entirely adapted to his own state. The holy word of truth and life is laid open, and illustrated by such an endless variety of simple parables, and such a regular chain of beautiful correspondencies, that must endear it to every sincere enquirer after useful and heavenly information, who is desirous of attaining to an higher, than earthly wisdom, and making every mode of instruction blessedly subservient to his progress, and advancement, to his growth, and perfection in the divine nature, life, and spirit of the great Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In one part of the word of truth, the Lord compareth man to a "vineyard," in another to a "garden," in another to a "wilderness," in another to a "fruitful field." To the last of these my text in a particular

particular manner belongs, where it is written, " Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy ; break up your fallow ground : for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come, and rain righteousness upon you." The words are few, but interesting, and important, let us therefore endeavour to consider,

First, What is meant by " sowing to ourselves in righteousness."

Secondly, What is signified by " reaping in mercy."

Thirdly, What is implied by " fallow ground," and what by " breaking it up."

Fourthly, How necessary it is to " seek the Lord, till he come."

And lastly shew, How in consequence of such a procedure, the Lord will " rain righteousness upon us."

First, Then let us consider, what is meant by " sowing to ourselves in righteousness."

" To sow," when applied to this outward world, or natural state of things, signifies to cast seed into the ground. Previous, however, to such a process, the sower must be furnished with every requisite for such an undertaking ; he must have seed to sow ; he must have ground to cast it upon, and a willingness to execute his labour, otherwise all his endeavours will be fruitless, and all his pains abortive. Just so it is spiritually with every son and daughter of fallen Adam, who is the sower, or husbandman here required to " sow to himself in righteousness." The ground, on which the celestial seed, which is the holy word of truth, must be sown, is the heart or
soul

soul of man, which is as a field, in which springeth, and groweth whatever is sown therein, according to its nature and quality, either the pure love of the Lord, and its attendant comforts, or the love of self, of this world, and the flesh, with its corresponding fruits, darkness, misery, condemnation, and death. In this field man is daily sowing either the seed of life, or death, of earth, or heaven, of nature or spirit, of sin or of good.—There is no rest from labour—No inactive state—No listless sloth—No unmeaning indolence.—Man, however, in his natural state, is not aware what high privileges he enjoyeth from above.—He often, alas! pleadeth inability to “sow unto himself in righteousness”.—This he attributeth to the alone care of the great lover of souls—God, he will say, and God alone can regenerate and purify my heart—my best services are only sinful—I cannot set one step forward in the way of righteousness.—Alas! poor, deluded mortal! Who told thee, that thou hadst no power to help thyself? Who told thee, that it would be madness in thee to attempt to sow in thine own heart, and to cultivate, through the divine favour, blessing, and mercy, the seeds of meekness, patience, love, faith, gentleness, goodness, and every other amiable property of the Great Redeemer? Surely, thou hast, to thy sorrow, and confusion, been hitherto enabled to sow to thy self pride, impatience, hatred, unbelief, anger, wickedness, and every other property of thy fallen life and spirit.—Thy God hath made thee a free creature; he hath, in love and mercy to thy soul, abundantly furnished thee with the means, which are to be found in every part of the word of truth, and all that thou hast to observe is to apply those means to thy benefit, not remaining all the day idle, but labouring

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with all diligence to bring thy work to an happy conclusion. Remember, that on thy application, or non-application of those means thy happiness depends—because if thou “sowest not in righteousness,” thou canst never “reap in mercy.”

There is nothing in life, from which man doth not expect to reap advantage. In his connections with the world, gain is his greatest object, and benefit his greatest delight. But alas! how can he expect to reap, who has never sown? How can he expect a plentiful harvest, who hath nipped the tender ear, or blasted the aspiring blade? Nothing produceth nothing—and he, who hath sown to himself only the fruits of an earthly, carnal, and sensual life, can expect only the reward of unrighteousness, which is Eternal Death.

Let us, however, Secondly, Enquire, what it is to “reap in mercy.”

To reap, we all know, implies a collecting or gathering, whatever hath been brought to a state of ripeness, or maturity. Watchfulness, care, and circumspection, are necessary in this important work, for should the reaper be inattentive to his office, or careless in his employment, the fruits of all his former labour might be injured, or lost for ever. Just so it is in our spiritual field, and spiritual harvest. When through the divine mercy we have sown the good seed of everlasting truth and life in our hearts, much care, much attention, and much circumspection is necessary, that we reap in mercy, that we suffer not the ripened ears to drop and perish, without affording any means to bring it to our store-house, or
gather

gather it into our garner. What, indeed, will it avail the industrious labourer, to have sown the good seed, if he doth not also endeavour to reap it at a proper time, and in a suitable manner; and what will it avail us to have sown in ourselves the seeds of holy truth, if we do not endeavour to bring forth therefrom the fruits, and blessed increase of a new nature, life, and spirit; if we do not endeavour to manifest the sincerity of our faith by our practice; thus deriving every possible advantage from our knowledge, by bringing it into an open birth, and manifestation, into a living power, life, and spirit, and thus experiencing the full meaning and blessed efficacy of Our Lord's words, when he saith, "If ye *know* these things, happy are ye, if ye *do* them."—Mercy is the darling attribute, and most lovely and amiable quality of the Great Redeemer. The Redeemer is love itself—The Redeemer is goodness itself—The Redeemer is purity itself, "and his tender mercies are over all his works." Surely man, then, cannot hesitate to imitate so blessed a pattern, so amiable an example. Surely sinful man cannot scruple to "sow unto himself in righteousness and reap in mercy," when his own happiness is the result of such a proceeding; when he, and he alone, receiveth the benefit and happy effects thereof both in time and in eternity. Prone, however, to indolence in spiritual things, forgetful of God and eternity, forgetful of the bountiful goodness of the Great Lover of Souls, he often suffereth the divine grace to perish and die; often, though the Lord hath in mercy vouchsafed to him some manifestations of his goodness, some openings of his truth, and some tokens of his love, hath he, like the wayward child, and the thoughtless prodigal, suffered the ground of

his heart to remain uncultivated, and fallow, and brought no fruit to perfection.

Let us, however, Thirdly, Enquire, what is meant by "fallow ground," and what by "breaking it up."

"Fallow ground," we know, is that kind of land, which hath been cultivated, but is now permitted for a season to remain at rest. Alas! with respect to ourselves, how applicable is this simile of the word of God, and what reason have we to lament that our hearts are uncultivated and barren, though the Lord hath in mercy often laboured to induce us to "sow to ourselves" the seeds of every blessing "in righteousness," that we might "reap" the sweet fruits of holiness and piety "in mercy" to ourselves? How often hath the Lord unveiled himself to our eyes? How often hath he laboured to convince us of our sins, to bring us to repentance, and newness of life? Did we attend to these proofs of unutterable love and mercy, did we but attend to the right culture of these heavenly comforts, instead of uncultivated ground, we should have fruitful fields and plentiful harvests, instead of "briars and thorns, and noxious weeds," instead of every evil and every sin; instead of every false, and every error, we should have "corn and wine and oil," we should have love, truth, obedience, joy, thanksgiving, and mirth, gratitude, adoration and praise, holy tempers, affections, dispositions, and desires, and our "granaries would be filled with abundance, and our houses with all manner of store." It is in order to bring man to this happy state, that he is exhorted to "break up his fallow ground," that it may thus be in a proper state

state to be improved. Let us but attend to this important truth, and we shall find abundant reason to bless the Lord in a particular manner for so great a privilege, for so unbounded a mercy. We are here exhorted ourselves to "break up the fallow ground." There is unhappily amongst many of us a narrow and contracted opinion of our own abilities, and powers to help ourselves. Men often indulge themselves with idle speculations and vain opinions. They will of themselves be able to execute and fulfil all wickedness; they will of themselves, and to themselves, "sow unrighteousness;" but are weak enough to imagine, that they cannot set one step forward in the way to piety and holiness. What should we say, however, of that man, who having a field to cultivate, seed to sow, implements to work with, and strength to undergo the task, should say, he could not sow, he could not work, he could not labour?—Should we not think him void of reason? Should we not think him worthy of the severest punishment, because though he was furnished with the means and power, he was yet too indolent to apply them to his benefit and advantage? Just so it is with respect to man, and his spiritual concerns. The Lord hath made him a free creature—he hath furnished him with the means—he hath given him the word of eternal truth for his guide, and by a proper use of, and obedience to, this blessed rule of holy living, man may become wise, holy, just, and good, and an happy partaker of every comfort. To "break up fallow ground," therefore, implies, that we do not suffer the blessed influences of the Holy Spirit of Truth to be shed upon us in vain—that we do not shut our eyes, our ears, and our hearts, to the light and love of heaven, but cultivate every amiable sensibility,

sibility, every sweet emotion of divine compassion to our own souls, forsaking and destroying the power of sin by repentance, and thus opening a way for the divine "light" to shine in upon, and the divine "heaven" to work in our souls to the furtherance and advancement of the Lord's kingdom of purity and peace, and to our own growth and perfection in the divine nature. That this process is necessary will appear evident if we consider,

Fourthly, How necessary it is to "seek the Lord, till he come."

The nature of man's situation, as a free creature, lays him under the indispensable necessity of seeking the Lord, if he hath any desire of happiness and glory. Man, in his natural state, hath forsaken the Lord, and all the pure joys and delights, which are to be found only in him. He hath sought for happiness, which, when attained, is only imaginary, and is soon no more. He hath formed and taken to himself other Gods, than the true God; and thus hath caused the Lord to appear far removed from him, "because his sins have separated between him and God, and hath caused him to hide his face from him." To seek the Lord, therefore, is our greatest comfort, as well as our bounden duty, inasmuch as we can never come to the knowledge, or enjoyment, of the Lord, unless we seek him, by repentance, and prepare our hearts for his habitation, and the place of his rest. "Seek the Lord," saith the Prophet, "while he may be found, call upon him, while he is near." Doubtless it is high time to amend our ways and our doings. We have hither lived in an entire ignorance of what he is able to do for us.—

We

We have, it is to be lamented, too often slighted his overtures of mercy. Our understandings have been unenlightened by divine truth, and our wills in bondage to the love of ourselves, of this world, and the flesh; and consequently we have never sought the Lord in earnest, and therefore he can never come unto us. Let us but turn to the Lord and he will be found of us—Let us but open our hearts and he will enter in—Let us but “call upon him in the time of trouble, and he will hear us.” Alas! What havock and ravages hath sin made in the world! It hath introduced disorder and sickness, sin and death, into our souls and bodies; and “the Redeemer will not enter into a body, which is subject to sin.”—Look around, and contemplate sin in its various forms and various consequences.—Where shall we find one, who is truly seeking the Lord?—Miserable enquiry!—Dreadful apostacy!—and awful ruin! Is there none seeking the Lord? Is there none endeavouring to cultivate the divine graces of meekness, humility, charity, and love? These, and these only, are the Lord’s kingdom, and power; and it is thus alone that we can seek him, and it is in these alone that he will come unto us. Whatever is of God can make us happy,—whatever is from him, and partakes of his nature, is regeneration, and redemption, and life, and peace. When we have thus opened our hearts to the power of divine truth and love; the Lord will then “come and rain righteousness upon us.”

Water, I have repeatedly told you, when spiritually applied, signifies divine truth, or the holy word of the Lord. So in this passage by “the Lord’s raining righteousness upon us,” is signified, his communicating

dicating to us the wisdom, and knowledge of heaven, and its pure delights. It is according to this sense, that it is written by the blessed apostle, that "the Lord causeth his sun to shine, and his rain to descend upon the just and the unjust." The Lord, however, can never "rain **RIGHTEOUSNESS** upon us," till we have a desire to be filled with his **FULLNESS**.—The rain cannot be received but into the thirsty and dry land—Neither can any vegetation be produced, unless the seed be sown, in good ground, and the rain descends to refresh, to feed, to nourish, and support it.—Ask yourselves, therefore, in the presence of God, these, or some such questions as these: What seed have I "sown" in my heart? What trouble or pains have I used to "break up the fallow ground?" Have I sown the seed of sin unto death, or the seed of righteousness unto holiness, and life eternal? Have I yet thought it "high time to seek the Lord?" Am I now enquiring, What I must do to be saved? Is my heart, "like a thirsty and barren land, where no water is;" and in consequence thereof, do I thirst for the river of living water? Have I opened my soul to receive the influences of divine love, and mercy from the Lord; and hath he "rained righteousness upon me?" Am I in a state of humility? Am I in a state of humble dependance upon the Lord? Am I endeavouring to become holy, as he is holy, pure as he is pure? Such questions as these you can each ask yourselves; you can soon give an answer—You need no learning.—It is written in indelible characters upon the tablet of your hearts. May the Lord, therefore, incline all our hearts so to "sow to ourselves in righteousness, that we may reap in mercy!" May we "break up our fallow ground," our uncultivated hearts,

hearts, and cultivate therein the properties and virtues of the divine goodness! May we consider in earnest that "it is high time to seek the Lord," and may we so "seek him," that he may be "found by, and come unto us, and rain righteousness upon us," even all the fullness of his mercy, providence, goodness, truth, love, and life eternal, to his own glory, and to our everlasting happiness and comfort.

II SERMON

SERMON XXIII.

PSALM lxxi. Ver. 18.

"O! WHAT GREAT TROUBLES, AND ADVERSITIES HAST THOU SHEWED ME! AND YET DIDST THOU TURN, AND REFRESH ME; YEA, AND BROUGHTEST ME FROM THE DEEP OF THE EARTH AGAIN!"

OF all the dispensations of an All-wise, All-merciful, and All-just Providence, none in general is fraught with greater mercies, or productive of more real blessings, than that of suffering, and affliction. Man, however, in his carnal, and unregenerate state, blinded with appearances, and overwhelmed with imaginary sorrows, can see none of these sublime benefits, but considers adversity as his greatest enemy, and the darkest foe to his peace. He cannot imagine, how misery can be the proper inlet to comfort, nor how outward darkness can be the means of producing inward light, and joy. The reason of this blindness to the things of God, and eternity will be more clearly pointed out to us, if we consider,

First, Whence affliction ariseth, and from what source it springeth;

Secondly, What blessed purposes it is intended to answer;

Thirdly,

Thirdly, In what sense the Lord is said to "shew us troubles, and adversities;"

And Lastly, How we may engage the Lord to "turn, and refresh us, and bring us from the deep of the earth again;"---And may the Lord of all mercy enable us to behold with truly spiritual eyes his goodness, that we may profit thereby; and "praise him for the wonders, that he doeth for the children of men!"

First, then, let us consider, whence affliction ariseth, and from what source it springeth,

Affliction in general may be considered of two kinds, viz. such as hath relation to the body, or bodily life, and such as hath relation to the soul, or spirit, or spiritual life. All affliction, however, let it be well observed, whether it be of an earthly, or of a spiritual nature, hath its rise, and origin, and conception in the heart of man. Man, in consequence of the fall, "having the understanding darkened, is alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance, that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart." Being born in this state of evil, and falsehood, his will inclined to all manner of evils, and his understanding immersed in all kinds of falses, what can proceed from such a disordered state, but affliction, but distress, and anguish, but confusion, and disorder, and misery, and death? Similar principles, we know, produce similar actions, when in a state of freedom, and without disguise; and, therefore, man, who is principled in evil, and an evil life, must assuredly produce nothing but evil, which is the parent of sorrow, distress, and woe.----"Every good, and perfect gift," saith St. James, "is from above, and cometh

down from the Father of lights, with whom is no *variableness*, neither *shadow of turning*." St. John likewise tells us, "that God is love." Doubtless, nothing but blessings can proceed from the God of love; nothing but comfort from the Father of mercies; nothing but joy from the Lord of life, and glory. All evil is from ourselves; all sickness, anguish, pain, inquietude, affliction, and distress of every kind proceeds only from a want of that order, purity, love, and beauty, of which the Lord himself is the grand source, and fountain. Affliction, "adversity, and troubles" arising, therefore, from the spring of our own corrupted hearts, and nature,

Let us in the Second place, Enquire, what blessed purposes it is intended to answer.

The one, and only purpose of the Lord, in all his dispensations, is to comfort his creatures, to shew mercy unto them, to point out to them their corruptions, and disorders, to bring them from a state of darkness, confusion, disorder, and death, to a state of light, harmony, order, and life. That man stands in need of such separation from the source of evil, and such a conjunction with the fountain of goodness, is evident from what we have already shewn him to be in his unregenerate state. Where, then, or from whom, can he find help in time of "adversity?" From himself he knows very well he can receive no relief; his own imperfection he is convinced hath brought, or admitted these calamities; his own inability to remove them he is sufficiently acquainted with. What, therefore, must be done? Should he have recourse to the assistance of his fellow-creatures, their assistance, alas! is vain. In temporal

poral losses; in the loss of fortune, and of his property, they will seldom, or but sparingly, aid him; in anguish of spirit, they can afford him no consolation; in the loss of health he may apply to them, but they cannot raise him up; in the gloomy hour of approaching dissolution, their cares, their anxieties, their assiduity, their attention cannot support him, their assistance cannot even extend to the removal of bodily infirmities. He then begins to see his want of power; he then begins to be sensible, that what he before trusted in, was only "vanity, and vexation of spirit;" he then begins to consider, how thoughtless, and unadvised he was to trust in those things, which satisfy but for a moment, and to turn himself with seriousness, and in good earnest to look for help to One, who is both able, and willing to remove his affliction, and give him rest. The Lord, and the Lord alone, he is now convinced, can be his comforter, his protector, his guide, and friend. To him, therefore, he applies, and he, "who feedeth the young ravens, when they cry unto him," is not insensible to his children's wants, but rejoiceth to comfort, to relieve, and bless them, whenever they feel their want of him, and seek his protection. Thus the heart, which before its trials, was satisfied, was contented, was blessed, was happy, in its own conceit, whilst it lived in a state of uninterrupted earthly comforts, at length feels their emptiness, and their vanity, when the day of visitation approacheth.

Having now considered what blessed purposes afflictions are intended to answer,

Let

Let us, Thirdly, Enquire in what sense the Lord may be said to "shew us troubles, and adversities."

It is generally imagined, that the Lord is angry with man, that he afflicts him with disorders of every kind, both natural and spiritual, because of sin, and a sinful life. The Lord, however, in no wise, is angry with man; neither doth he afflict him because of sin. Such, indeed, appear his dealings, with the children of men, to the earthly-minded, the carnal, and the sensual; to whom the things of eternity; to whom the concerns of God, of heaven, and an heavenly birth, and life, are foolishness: and who weigh, and judge of, all occurrences, without discrimination, and distinction, whether good, or evil, as sent by, proceeding from, and governed and directed by, the Father of all spirits. I have endeavoured, however, to shew you, that all evil has its rise in man's fallen life, which is separate from the Lord, through evils of heart, and falses of the understanding; and that nothing but what is PURE, nothing, but what is HOLY, JUST, and GOOD proceedeth from, and is directed by the Lord of life and love, because "in him is NO VARIABLENESS, neither SHADOW OF TURNING," and "God is LOVE." The Lord, notwithstanding, "shews us troubles, and adversities," though he does not send them, nor inflict them upon us. And here we cannot sufficiently admire, and adore the unsearchable, and unbounded mercy of the divine goodness, which is ever employed in opening our spiritual eyes, and in unstopping our deaf ears, that he may shew to us our danger, our want, and necessity, and inform us, where we may apply

apply for help in time of trouble, and not apply in vain.

The Psalmist, in the words of my text, doth not say, "O what troubles, and adversities hast thou inflicted upon me; and yet didst thou turn, and refresh me again;" yet this undoubtedly would he have done, if the Lord had afflicted him; but he cries out in gratitude, and thankfulness, "O! what troubles and adversities hast thou SHEWED me; and yet didst thou turn, and refresh me!" In our natural, unregenerate state, we can only see with natural, and unregenerate eyes---afflictions, troubles, and adversities affect only our natural, and earthly spirit---We grieve with an earthly grief---we sorrow with an earthly sorrow---we lament only the loss, and want, of worldly goods, and blessings; and consequently can have only earthly consolations for them. When the wounded spirit, however, looketh beyond this world, and the flesh; when it extendeth its views further than earth, and its comforts; it perceiveth the shades and mists of error to withdraw from before its sight, and the Lord, in mercy, unveiling the nature of its malady, and the means of its recovery, to its darkened, and bewildered senses. "He openeth the blind eyes," when man hath ceased to look for assistance in all *outward* means: "He unstoppeth the deaf ear," when man ceaseth to listen to the enchanting, and delusive voice of propriety, or self-love, or self-hood: He teacheth the use, and blessedness of being brought to a state of distress, and nothingness; inasmuch as he can thereby alone be brought to know his wants, to feel his own inability to supply them, and to implore the interposition, and help of that "SAVIOUR," who is "mighty to save;" and a
 "very

"very ready helper in the needful time of trouble!" Happy would it be, indeed, for thousands, who are living at ease, unafflicted with sickness, unattacked with misfortune, and basking in the sunshine of prosperity, could they but see their misery, in being without, that is, unacquainted with, and insensible of, these calamities; since it is through these, perhaps of temporal, but certainly of a spiritual nature, and probably of both, that they are to be brought to a knowledge of their condition, and a knowledge of themselves. Be it well observed, however, that this spiritual view of our situation is extended to us only so far as we die to our own propriety, and self-love; and look to the Lord, and the Lord alone, for his interposition, and help. Our view of spiritual evil keepeth pace with our progress in the practice of divine good, proceeding from an ardent love, and affection for goodness in our wills; for no sight, or view, or light is spiritual, when separated from the divine good, or a good life. The same divine "light," therefore, which "sheweth" unto us our evils, will become in us also a spiritual heat, the one *illuminating*, the other *warming*; the one "shining unto the *perfect day*," and the other bringing every affection, property, quality, and disposition of the heart and will, into a state of perfect blessedness; joy, and life eternal.

O! how beautiful is every part of the Psalmist's description of the divine mercy! Beauty, order, harmony, and heaven in every word! Hear the sweet, the ravishing expression! "Yet didst thou turn, and refresh me!"---No sooner do we admit the heavenly "light," the eternal wisdom, into our understandings; no sooner do we truly behold, and
see,

see, our misery ; no sooner do we see---see ! what?
 ---our corruptions---our evils---our darkness by nature.—No sooner do we see---see ! what?---the purity of heaven---our privilege, and change by repentance, and our illumination, through the admission of the divine truth, than---happy, happy tidings, ---the Lord “ turneth ” unto us ; “ shineth upon us with the light of his countenance ; and refresheth our weary souls.”

It is here said that the Lord “ turneth.” Such, indeed, he seemeth to do, to the repentant sinner. When in a state of evil, he beholdeth the Lord, as his greatest enemy, because he himself hath violated his laws, broken his commandments, and, therefore, feeleth himself deserving of punishment ; but in proportion as he departeth from evil, and an evil life ; in proportion as he obeyeth his laws, and observeth his commandments, to *do* them, so far the Lord appeareth unto him to “ turn,” to be reconciled, and full of mercy. Unchangeableness, however, hath no part in, or with, the divine mercy---it ever was, and ever will be, the same. It is man, that removeth from evil, approacheth unto the Lord, and thus conjunction with him is effected. St. Paul assureth us, that “ God was *in* Christ reconciling”---not himself unto the world, but---“ the world unto himself.” Hear what the Lord saith by the mouth of his Prophet, “ Your sins have separated between you, and me :” and in another place, “ Repent, and *turn yourselves*, and live ye :” and again, “ *Turn* unto me, and I will *turn* unto you ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?” We can then only cause the Lord to turn, or cause him to appear unto us to turn---though in reality we turn, and not the Lord, for he

is always the same---when we live a life of heavenly love, and charity, and thus become united with him. When the Lord is thus turned---or rather when man is thus turned---the effects of such a change are seen, felt, and experienced in every thought, every word, and every action of life. The blessings, which in his natural state, were disregarded, or lightly esteemed, because they were common, are now considered as ever new; ever calling for thankfulness, gratitude, and love; and ever to be acknowledged by a life, which plainly manifesteth, that his thankfulness, gratitude, and love, are not merely apparent, but true, genuine, and sincere. To a soul, thus employed; to a heart, thus engaged; to a mind thus occupied in the most exalted, and heavenly exercise of sincere acknowledgments for evils removed, for darkness dispersed, for goodness implanted, and truth imparted, the consolations of the Lord are, indeed, "refreshing;" and we truly "brought from the deep of the earth again;" from our own carnal, and fleshly lusts; from our own sensual desires; from our hatred to piety, and goodness; and from our aversion to every thing, which constituted the essence, and substance of the divine life.

Such was the comfort of holy David of old, arising from his beholding, by the blessing of the Lord, the benefit of affliction, of "troubles, and adversity;" and such, likewise, the experience of the Apostle, when he saith, "But we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope;" hope and trust in the divine mercy; hope and trust, that they will be sanctified to our benefit, and his own eternal glory.

Having

Having now endeavoured to illustrate the whole of the text, both in a natural, and spiritual point of view, both as it respecteth time, and eternity; our greatest interest, our greatest benefit, and our greatest wisdom will be, to apply it to ourselves, with respect to our own experience, and practice. We all of us, beloved, are able, if we are but willing, to do this: None of us can plead ignorance, and excuse herein; inasmuch as each of us can answer for, and to, ourselves, how far we have been, and are, interested herein. With respect to the things of this world; with respect to matters of a temporal, and natural complexion, all of us, without exception, can attest the munificence of divine goodness, and boundless mercy. Which of us hath not experienced "troubles, and adversities" of this kind? Which of us can say, He either is not, or hath not been, in respect to natural things, more or less, a son, or daughter of affliction? Suffering, and trouble is the lot of all, whilst in an unregenerate state; and even in this state we cannot but admire, though only with natural views, and notions, the benefits, which "adversity" secureth. To the man, who was before improvident, and slothful in business, it hath afforded a lesson of carefulness, and diligence: To the man, who hath lost his all, it hath been a persuasive to more circumspection, and observance for the time to come: and to the man, who hath had nothing to lose, it hath been a kind monitor to lay up in store against a time, which would bring with it the same effects, unless properly, and effectually guarded against. Thus far with respect to the affairs of this life, which will soon have an end—but with respect to another life, what instructions hath it not given, and doth it not daily give,

to all around? To whom hath not "trouble, and adversity" pointed out the end of earthly comforts, the certainty of death, and the existence of a future state of being? To which of us have they not read lessons of heavenly wisdom, and instruction, which, if observed, would make us happy, both here, and hereafter? Who hath not, or who might not (had he been so disposed in his heart) have, seen in calamities, his own weakness—in suffering, his own poverty—in tribulation, his own feeble, and imperfect powers? Who hath not, or who might not have, experienced the divine aid, and assistance, by being brought into a state of humility, into a state of meekness, into a state of entire submission to, and dependance upon, the Lord's will and pleasure; into a state of thankfulness for past favors; into a state of gratitude for present benefits; and into a state of praise for his latest mercies? Which of us, I say, hath not, or might not (if he had been so disposed in his heart) have experienced these things? Let us each ask our own hearts, and let us each answer for ourselves: For my own part, I own his goodness thro' the whole of my life; his benefits have been perpetual; his favours unceasing; and his love without measure. He hath, indeed, "shewn me great troubles, and adversity;" he hath, in mercy, "turned, and refreshed me;" and---O unspeakable goodness---brought me*, last of all, "from the deep of the earth again!" What reason is there, then, for thankfulness! What urgent calls for a suitable return! What never-ceasing, and never-ending obligations to the Father of mercies, for favors, so great,

so

* This Discourse was preached after the Author had laboured under a very severe, and dangerous indisposition.

so many, so multiplied, and so late, as these! Each of you, I trust, hath been employed in a similar acknowledgment for himself; and O! may our acknowledgments, not be verbal, or in word only, but in heart, in sincerity, and in truth! May we all manifest our gratitude by a life of heavenly love, and charity, both towards the Lord, and towards our neighbour; and when we come to die, may we all expire with this language of happy confidence, tender gratitude, and affectionate love, upon our lips, "O! what great troubles, and adversities hast thou shewed me! and yet didst thou turn, and refresh me; yea, and broughtest me from the deep of the earth again."

SERMON

SERMON XXIV.

JEREMIAH, Chap. xxxi. Ver. 15, 16.

"THUS SAITH THE LORD, A VOICE WAS HEARD IN RAMAH, LAMENTATION, AND BITTER WEeping; RACHEL, WEeping FOR HER CHILDREN, REFUSED TO BE COMFORTED FOR HER CHILDREN, BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT."

"THUS SAITH THE LORD, REFRAIN THY VOICE FROM WEeping, AND THINE EYES FROM TEARS; FOR THY WORK SHALL BE REWARDED, SAITH THE LORD, AND THEY SHALL COME AGAIN FROM THE LAND OF THE ENEMY."

TO those, who have experienced the power of religion in their hearts, it cannot but be matter of serious astonishment, and concern, that mankind at large should have so little knowledge of, and so small a share of affection for, the sublime exercises of Internal Devotion. The cause, however, of this deplorable, and much-to-be-lamented darkness, and coldness, may easily be accounted for by the Christian philosopher, who considers all outward nature, all external occurrences, events, and actions, as grounded in, proceeding from, and operating by, some internal source, fountain, and power. He is well aware, that beauty, order, and harmony, are the very constituents, and life of heaven, and that nothing, but a want of these, is the spring from whence arise the opposite manifestations

festations of deformity, disorder, and discord. When man, therefore, is labouring under the oppressive load of outward anxiety, distress, and misery, he wisely and justly concludes, that these evils are only the appearance of some more powerful and destructive malady, which is rooted, and lurking within. Whatever is man's love, that is his life; and the happiness, or misery of that life is clearly known by the food and nourishment, which it receives. If man's love, or will-principle, therefore, be given up to the concerns of an eternal, and internal world; if he be "seeking the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" he is then living a life of purity, blessedness, and heaven: but, should his desires be immersed in earthly, sensual objects only; should he be seeking the pleasures, benefits, and comforts of this world, and the flesh only, he is then living a life of impurity, condemnation, and death.

In this view of things, and impressed with an awful sense of these important truths, let me bespeak your most serious attention, whilst I endeavour, through the divine favor, and assistance, to point out the spirituality, and internal meaning of the words of my text; and may the God of unutterable love, and mercy lastingly, and savingly, impress, and imprint them on your hearts, and mine.

In the former part of his Prophecy, Jeremiah had represented the miserable, and deplorable state of the Jewish Church, and in the chapter preceding that, of which my text is a part, had foretold their happy return; which was brought about by their turning to the Lord, "with lamentation, and bitter weeping,"

weeping," inasmuch as it is written, " Thus saith the Lord, a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy."

These words, however, have a far more important meaning, and signification to us than that of the mere historical relation, inasmuch as they spiritually regard us, as well as the Jews of old, and it is equally as necessary for us to lament the loss of our spiritual children; before " our work can be rewarded, and our children come again from the land of the enemy."

By Ramah mentioned in my text is signified the Remains, which are the knowledges of goodness, and truth, and which the Lord hath, in love, and mercy, implanted in every man, as a means, whereby he may be regenerated, and redeemed, and finally be made happy with his God. We all of us are sufficiently sensible, how much we stand in need of these remains, inasmuch as we are all of us in a state of darkness, in a state of separation from the love, and truth of the Lord, and whilst we remain in such a state can never have conjunction with our God, and Redeemer, and be made partakers of his eternal rest. Man, therefore, being in a state of evil, and sin, the Lord, who is love itself, and truth itself, communicates of that his love and truth to those remains of love and truth, which are in man; and whenever man admits, by the freedom of his will, this love and truth of the Lord, then he is in conjunction with his Redeemer,

Redeemer, then he becomes a partaker of the divine nature, he is "one with God, and God with him, he dwelleth in God, and God in him."

The manner, however, in which these remains, or these knowledges of goodness, and truth, are brought forth into manifestation, or life, is beautifully and naturally represented, by "a Voice heard in Ramah." By "Voice," when mentioned in the sacred scriptures, or word of God, is signified Internal Impression, or Conscience. Men, indeed, at the present day have, by reason of evils of life, and falses of doctrine, lost the knowledge, how these internal impressions, or observation, or conscience, which are one and the same thing, originate and work in man, inasmuch as they have cut off the communications of love and wisdom from the Lord, by a life devoted to earthly-mindedness, and the flesh. The truth, however, is this: Both evil and good spirits have their abode and habitation in man; the evil spirits have their abode in his evil, earthly, and carnal affections, which he imbibed by the fall; and the good spirits have their abode in his good, heavenly, and divine affections, which he is capable of enjoying, by virtue of those remains, or those knowledges of goodness and truth, which the Lord appointed, in mercy, at the fall, as the only possible means, whereby man's freedom could be continued to him, and himself made able to "work out his own salvation with fear and trembling."

When the * evil spirits, therefore, begin to have dominion, when they threaten to overwhelm man in darkness, misery, and death, by subjecting him to the

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power

* He sent Evil Angels among them." Psalm 78. ver. 50.

power of all evil, such as envy, hatred, malice, revenge, covetousness, self-love, love of dominion, and the like; then the * blessed angels, or spirits, which are ever attendant upon, and ever eager to secure the best interests, and happiness of man, labour to avert those above-mentioned evils, and falses, by endeavouring to awaken a spirit of, and love for, the contrary virtues of good-will, charity, affection, meekness, love of usefulness, love of our neighbour, humility, and the like. Hence ariseth a combat between good and evil, between truth and falshood; and a man feels this combat by perception, inward impression, or conscience.

The beauty of this expression, "A Voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping," may be clearly seen, by all who are not wilfully blind to the illuminating light of the gospel of love, life, and peace. How, but by "a Voice heard in Ramah," can Israel return? How, but by an inward perception of evil, can man be led to "lament and weep," and thus to work the "work of repentance to salvation, which needs not to be repented of?" Doubtless, beloved, no other "lamentation, and weeping," will be of any real service, or avail us any thing in the sight of the Lord. The following words will sufficiently enable us to judge of such a lamentation, if we consider, what is meant by "Rachel; what by weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, and what by their not being."

By

* "O Everlasting God, who hast ordained, and constituted the services of
"Angels, and men, in a wonderful order; mercifully grant, that as thy holy
"Angels always do thee service in heaven; so by thy appointment, they may
"succour and defend us on *Earth*, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Collect for St. Michael, and all Angels.

By "Rachel" here mentioned, we are to understand the affection of internal truth.—What Rachel lamented was the loss of her children, who had been led away captive by the enemy; her children, in whom she had once so much delighted; her spiritual children, that is, all that heavenly truth and light, and knowledge, and "wisdom which is from above;" all those heavenly affections, dispositions, and tempers, which spring from, and are born of, the will, as their parent, and head; and which were now in bondage to their greatest enemy, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

When man, by a due attention to his remains, and a proper regard to his inward perception, or conscience, experiences a combat between the powers of heaven, and the powers of darkness, within him, he cannot but lament the loss of his children, that is of goodness and truth, and refuse to be comforted, until they are again restored unto him. Happy state this, indeed, is, when by a true conviction, we become acquainted with our malady, and disorder, and earnestly apply for that "balm of Gilead," which is a cure and remedy for every complaint; for, till sin is felt, and known, and acknowledged; till we experimentally find ourselves to be deprived of all heavenly goodness, and truth, and the blessings connected with, and resulting therefrom, we shall never have just reason to expect the agreeable salutation, contained in the latter verse of my text, where it is written, "Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping; and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy."

Joyful ! blessed tidings these, to the repentant mourners in Zion ! " Thy work shall be rewarded ! " What work shall be rewarded ? The work of " lamentation, and weeping ; " the work of inward and true contrition, and repentance ; and it shall be followed by the return of thy children, by the communications of heaven-born charity, and truth ; by the restoration of every divine affection, principle, and disposition, and temper, and succeeded by the mild, gentle, and amiable influences of comfort, peace, and love ! No sooner does man repent, and turn to the Lord, but his children begin to return from the " land of the enemy ; " and experience a deliverance from their grievous thralldom.

By " Land " is signified the natural state of man, or the external man, separated from the internal, and hereby we may behold the miserable situation of those, who have no idea of, no love and affection for, an inward and spiritual life, and worship. They are prisoners and captives in the land of the enemy, slaves to every impure and earthly temper, bound by the fetters of self-love, and imprisoned in the dark caverns of an inverted, and infernal life and spirit. To come again from the " land of the enemy " must, therefore, be a blessed deliverance, being no less than a return to the Lord our God, and the enjoyment of his love, and truth.

Let us, now enquire, how far we are sensible of the loss of our children, that is, of our heavenly affections, and how far we are entitled to expect their return from the land of the enemy. Prone to indolence in spiritual things, and almost entire strangers to the higher concerns of another life, it will not be
thought

thought matter of great surprise, if, when "we are weighed in the balance, we are found wanting." The day of serious investigation, however, is not very far distant; and we cannot better employ the present moment, than in asking ourselves now, in the presence of God, some such heart-searching, yet useful, and necessary questions as these—What are my ideas of, and thoughts about, another, and a future state of being?—What are my ideas of God, and his eternal kingdom?—Do I form him to my own imagination; as a God of spotless purity, adorable goodness, and unutterable love? Do I imagine his kingdom to be formed, and consist of, beauty, order, and harmony?—Do I consider, that nothing, but what is united with, and partakes of the same perfections, can make me truly happy?—Am I aware, however, that I am sunk in evils, and overwhelmed with falses?—Am I sensible, that "my children," that is, my affections, are in bondage, and in "the land of the enemy?"—And am I, in consideration thereof, in "lamentation, and weeping," anxiously concerned for their deliverance, and longing to see them rescued from the hand of the oppressor? Some such enquiries, as these, you are all of you, enabled to make; and may satisfy yourselves in the respective answers. You need not go to any learned divine; you are under no obligation to peruse, and pore over, any laboured comments, to be convinced of your true condition. Look into your own hearts, there read what is written, there read what characters are imprinted, for "if your heart condemn you not, then have you confidence towards God. Examine well into your daily life, and conversation; and faithfully prove, whether it be "in heaven," and whether you thence look for, and expect, the coming of,
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the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, that is, his regenerating love, and truth, warming your hearts, operating in your wills, illuminating your understandings, and rendering the whole man, a true man, a real, substantial, spiritual man, a form of beauty, order, harmony, and love. To those, who never make the necessary inquiry; who never see their own dark, and disordered state, as they ought; who are priding themselves in their pharasaical worship, confined merely to the externals, without ever looking into the internals, the divine power of religion; who are yet in a state of impenitence; who are not troubled with "lamentation, and bitter weeping," I must say, Ye are yet in the "land of the enemy;" your children are prisoners, though ye know it not; and that nothing, but boundless mercy, and unutterable love, can set them at liberty, and bring them "again to their own border." But to those, who are spiritually mourning; who are feelingly alive to, and sensibly affected with, the loss of their children, their spiritual comforts, I say, Be of good comfort; suffer not the enemy thus to oppress you; for though your children are not yet in perfect liberty, though your affections, and desires, be not wholly given up, and surrendered to the Lord, yet they are now on their return, and will speedily be established in complete freedom. Hear what the Lord himself saith by his prophet Jeremiah, "Fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel; for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity."

May we all of us, beloved, ponder these things well! Nothing but an evil heart, and evil will; nothing but a forgetfulness of God, and an evil life, separate

separate us from our God, and subject us to the dominion, and power of all misery, sin, and death. Men may say what they please of fate, of chance, and the like ; but be assured, that man is the author of all evil, and sin, to himself—God is goodness itself—God is truth itself—God is purity itself—God is love itself—and therefore, when man is not in the enjoyment of goodness, truth, purity, and love, it is a manifest, and undoubted proof, that he has perverted the divine law of order ; and begotten in himself confusion, and disorder. Too many, and too certain proofs, alas ! of this perversion of order ! Too many, and too certain proofs of a deviation from gospel purity and gospel love ! Too many, and too certain proofs of a total failure of all heaven-born charity and truth, is manifest in every part of the earth. The present calamities, and distresses, which mankind are now universally experiencing, proceed from no other fountain, than that of general evil, and general depravity. “ The hearts of men are desperately wicked ; ” their wills are enslaved to earth, and earthly objects ; and these outward convulsions are but the manifested births, or external appearances, of those our inward disorders, wars, tumults, and other spiritual calamities, which are passing within.

May we all, therefore, in good earnest, endeavour to recover our children from the Land of the enemy ! May we endeavour to cultivate more, and more, a spirit of inward piety ! May we endeavour to subdue the depravity of our own will ; for thus, and thus only, shall we be freed from, and escape the desolation of destruction ; and avoid those miseries, which are ever the sure, and unavoidable consequences of an earthly, carnal, selfish, fallen, and infernal life !

And

And O holy, and merciful Jesus! In all our afflictions may we spiritually look up unto thee! let thy compassionate arm shield us from the power of the enemy, and bring us back from the land of the destroyer, that we may at length be freed from every fear, and trouble; daily rejoice in thy regenerating, and redeeming love, and truth; and ascribe unto thee, the ever-blessed, and ever-to-be-adored Lord of Life, and glory, continual thanks, and praise, both in time, and in eternity, --- Amen.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



* * In consequence of having very few copies but what were subscribed for, a Second Edition of this Volume will be printed, if required.

✎ It is also intended to publish, by Subscription, a Second Volume, containing Twenty-four Sermons.

N. B. Such persons as are inclined to encourage the above publications, are desired to send their names to J. WATERWORTH, Printer, Blackburn, as early as possible, so as to ascertain the number of copies to be taken off.

